DISSERTATION

BACHELOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' RATINGS OF SOCIAL WORK SKILLS AND ADVISING EXPERIENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL BACCALAUREATE EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PACKAGE (BEAP) EXIT SURVEY DATA

Submitted by

Tobi A. DeLong Hamilton

School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2009

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Committee on Graduate Work

Dr. David Most

Dr. Kimberly Bundy-Fazioli

Dr. Clifford Harbour

Advisor: Dr. George Morgan

Co-Advisor: Dr. Victoria Buchan

Department Director: Dr. Timothy Davies

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Bachelor Social Work Students' Ratings of Social Work Skills and Advising Experience: An Analysis of the National Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package (BEAP) Exit Survey Data

This study examined two sections the Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package Exit Survey data from 2000-2007. BEAP is used by BSW programs to track students over time from entrance into a social work program to two years after graduation. A total of 16,996 student responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. Almost 90% of the participants were female students and 10% were male students and the mean age of students was 28 years-old. The overall student GPA was 3.3 and the majority had no reported disability (72%). The majority of social work programs that used the BEAP Exit Survey were smaller, BSW only, and located in public institutions.

Student demographics did not predict social work skill ratings or advising experience. However, there were consistent patterns between skill and advising experience for non-traditional students. Program demographics did show notable results. Students in the smallest social work programs rated their skills higher on half of the skill questions. Students in private social work programs rated their social work skills higher than those students in public programs and students in BPD region six rated their social

work skills higher than all other BPD regions. There were no differences in advising or social work skill ratings for students in BSW or combined BSW/MSW programs.

Program demographics also showed notable results in the area of advising experience. Students in private denominational programs rated their advising experience higher than the other two program types and students in BSW only programs rated their advising experience higher. Students in the smallest programs rated their advising experience higher than other programs and students in BPD region one rated their advising experience higher than students in the other regions.

Competency-based learning, with agreed upon outcomes, is the basis for assessing and certifying individual student achievement within social work programs. This study provided meaningful data about social work students and programs and their relationships to social work skills and the advising experience. Based upon the results, suggestions for future research to fill gaps in the literature and to improve social work program assessment were made.

Tobi A. DeLong Hamilton
School of Education
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523
Spring 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members for their guidance and patience with me during this learning process. Without your knowledge, skill, and teaching ability, I would not have been as successful in this endeavor.

Rick, thank you and I love you so much. You have been understanding, supportive, and unconditional through this time of transition. My boys, Austin, Alex, and Riley, I hope watching your mother complete three college degrees will inspire the three of you to set and accomplish goals for yourselves. To my friends, Helen, Keri, Kristin and my CSU cohort - you rock! Thank you so much for your friendship and support.

This study is dedicated to my father, Jerald A. DeLong, my grandfather, Dr. Ralph E. DeLong, and my grandmother, A. Pauline DeLong. Although you are not here, I know you would have been proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Baccalaureate Education Assessment Package (BEAP), developed in 1999, is used to track students over time from their entrance into a social work program to two years after graduation. The package was developed by a volunteer group of social work professors, who make up the BEAP team, with support from the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) Association (Buchan, et al., 2004). The BEAP package is a copyrighted fee-based service available to all Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited and in-candidacy programs. All fees collected for the use of the surveys are sent directly to BPD. The BEAP package consists of four instruments: the BEAP Entrance Survey, the BEAP Exit Survey, the BEAP Employer Survey, and the BEAP Alumni Survey (BPD, n.d.). The authors of the BEAP instruments have collected data since inception, but have not fully analyzed the data due to time and budget constraints (Personal communication, Buchan, 2007).

This study analyzed the trends and characteristics of baccalaureate social work (BSW) students and programs at which the BEAP Exit Survey was utilized. Variables used in the analysis were student characteristics which included GPA, gender, age, and presence of a disability, as well as, program characteristics that included BPD region, program type (BSW only or combined BSW and MSW), program auspice (public, private denominational, or private non-denominational), and program size (Buchan, et al., 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of and relationships among BSW students and the social work programs they attend. This study analyzed the characteristics of baccalaureate social work (BSW) students and programs where the BEAP instruments have been completed. Two sections of the Exit Survey was analyzed to examine the relationships between the programs that use the BEAP package and the student's evaluation of the program they attended. An existing data base of the Exit Data, from 2000 through 2007, was used for this study. The Exit Survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

Rationale for the Study

The contribution this study will make to the field of social work is twofold. The study provides an in-depth analysis of the students and programs using the BEAP instruments, and it provides factors that predict positive student feedback on the Exit Survey. This information can be used by social work programs for accreditation, recruitment and retention of students, and curriculum planning.

The study of social work program evaluation is important for all programs of social work. Program evaluation is of interest for accreditation, recruitment and retention of students, and curriculum assessment. Interest will continue to be high in this area especially since the CSWE accreditation standards have recently changed. Although the standards still require social work programs to evaluate their program using outcome measures, the new 2008 standards do not give specific direction as to how to go about this evaluation process, leaving this up to each individual program. Program evaluation

is a demanding, and often times difficult, task for all social work programs (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007). Collecting program data and interpreting and understanding the data allows schools to monitor their programs effectively, as well as to stay in line with accreditation standards. The benefits of program assessment and monitoring include not only meeting accreditation requirements, but also provide for programs a better understanding of the demographics of their students and the students' feedback about the program. Student feedback is important for social work programs to assist in making positive curricular or programmatic change. Student evaluation may also assist in recruitment activities and retention of students.

The findings from this study will inform social work programs about the relationships that occur between students and the social work programs they attend, which will contribute to an understanding of what social work students want from their educational experience. Additionally, this study will contribute to the research and knowledge base of social work program evaluation.

There is literature available on social work program assessment. However, much of the literature available is on student satisfaction with and preparedness for higher education. Therefore, due to lack of ample studies in the area of social work program evaluation and assessment, this study provides insight into this important area of social work education.

Theory

The theoretical approach for this study was systems theory. Specifically, an environmental perspective which explains the importance of the educational environment

to the student and the impact this may have on student evaluations of their program. The environmental perspective can be traced back to the beginning of social work and has been central to social work practice (Cornell, 2006). This perspective views the individual in the context of his/her surrounding social systems (Systems Theory, 2008; Sheafor, et al., 2006; Johnson & Yanca, 2004). An environmental perspective informs this study in that the student's characteristics, the student's perception of the social work program and the student's interactions within the program influence the student's evaluation of the program.

Research Questions

1. a. What demographic qualities, including gender, age, GPA, and disability describe the student population that participated in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000-2007?

   b. How do these Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for age and gender?

2. a. What program qualities including program type, auspice, number of students graduating, and region, describe the programs participating in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000-2007?

   b. How do these Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for program type, auspice and size?

3. a. How do students rate each of the social work skills on the BEAP Exit Survey?

   b. How do students rate social work skills overall, broken down by student and program demographic variables?

4. a. How do students rate the quality of advising received in their social work program on the BEAP Exit Survey?

   b. How do students rate the quality of advising overall, broken down by student and program demographic variables?

5. How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?

6. How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?

7. How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?

8. How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?

Definitions

The Baccalaureate Assessment Package (BEAP) is a package of survey instruments provided for a fee to all CSWE accredited and in-candidacy BSW programs. Four different measurement instruments are available and span from student entrance into a BSW program to two years after graduation (BPD, n.d.).

The CSWE defines accreditation as ensuring the "competent preparation" of social work programs. "In accordance with the requirements of the Council's recognition body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the CSWE Office of Social Work

Accreditation and Educational Excellence (OSWAEE) administers a multi step accreditation process that involves program self-studies, site visits, and COA reviews" (CSWE, 2008, ¶ 1). Accreditation is "to recognize (an educational institution) as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice" (Merriam-Webster, 2008).

Social work programs are located in four year colleges or universities that are either public or private, and can include a denominational auspice. Students who complete a social work program typically receive a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. Social work programs contain a BSW program or combined BSW and MSW (Master of Social Work) programs. Some of the combined programs also offer a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) in social work or an interdisciplinary degree in social work and other areas of study.

According to Morgan, Gliner and Harmon (2006) a quantitative research study is a "disciplined inquiry" that is "systematic in nature" with "guidelines of how the research is to be carried out" (p. 9). Regression analysis is a method for "analyzing relationships between a pair of quantitative variables" (Agresti & Finlay, 1999, p. 301). Lastly, a secondary data analysis is the analysis of data collected by someone else, perhaps for some purpose other than that of subsequent analyses (Babbie, 2004).

The student variables analyzed in this study were GPA, gender, disability, and age. GPA is the self-reported GPA of the student during the time the student completed the exit survey. Gender was defined as female or male. Disability was any physical,

speech, medical, or disabling impairment the student may have reported on the instrument. Age was a measure defined as the day, month and year the student was born.

The social work program variables analyzed in this study were program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, and BPD regions. Program type is a program that offers a BSW degree or a program that offers a combined BSW and MSW degrees. A combined program can also offer a PhD. Program auspice is a public, private denominational, or private nondenominational social work program. The number of students graduating is the number of students who graduated in the social work program during time the Exit Survey was administered. BPD Region is the location in the country that a university is located. These six regions include Region 1 (AL, AR, MS, GA, FL, SC, LA, TN), Region 2 (OH, WV, VA, PA, KY, MD, DE, DC), Region 3 (KS, NE, TX, NM, AZ, CO, UT, OK), Region 4 (IA, MN, WI, IL, MO, IN, ND, SD, MI), Region 5 (HI, AK, WA, CA, ID, NV, WY, MT, OR), and Region 6 (NY, NJ, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME).

Delimitations

This study analyzed BSW student (N= 16,996), social work program (N= 203) demographic data, and skills preparation information, collected by the BEAP assessment team from 2000 through 2007. The programs that use the BEAP assessment package are representative of the entire population of social work programs. They are also similar in that they are accredited social work programs monitored by CSWE and their regional accrediting entities. BEAP data was used in this study as it was an accessible population.

The current overall BEAP Exit survey data base consists of 16,996 student evaluations. This study included BSW students enrolled at four year programs in schools that offer BSW or BSW and MSW degrees. This study also described the BEAP program participants with programs who do not use the BEAP instruments in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the sample. Data about non-BEAP programs was obtained from CSWE. The CSWE data was used as an available norm for comparison to national data. Programs not included in this analysis were those who do not use the BEAP assessment instruments and have chosen to evaluate their program with other assessment tools. The programs in this study elected to buy and use the BEAP instruments specifically for program evaluation.

Significance of the Study

CSWE requires that schools report on the outcomes of their programs, primarily during renewal of accredited program standing. The BEAP surveys assist social work programs in collecting outcome data for accreditation and renewal.

> The use of the BEAP provides consistency of assessment information gathered across many BSW programs, resulting in a large national data base. Programs can identify areas of curricular weakness and monitor changes that they make. Small programs will find that the BEAP provides them with assessment possibilities that they may not normally have the personnel or fiscal resources to pursue. (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007, p. 112)

Similar to a client satisfaction survey, the BEAP assists programs in understanding how their program is succeeding by surveying students within the

program. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, there have been limitations to statistical analysis completed by the BEAP team. Descriptive and inferential statistics, and percentile tables have been computed for the collected data, and then reported back to the schools either on the website and/or at the BPD annual conferences. These statistical results are posted on the BEAP website in order for schools to compare themselves nationally. This study completed an in-depth analysis of one section of the Exit Survey, contained in the BEAP assessment package, giving a national picture of BSW students, and social work programs and the relationships between them.

According to Buchan et al. (2004), more than 247 of the 442 accredited BSW programs have used the BEAP instruments. Programs continue to order and use the BEAP instruments, which increases the size and strength of the data gathered by the BEAP team. The analysis of the gathered data, reporting the results, and disseminating the findings of this study, will be a valuable contribution to baccalaureate education.

Researcher Perspective

I hold both a bachelor and master's degree in social work, and I am currently obtaining a combined doctorate degree in social work and education. All of my social work degrees have been obtained as a non-traditional student. I have 15 years of social work practice experience that includes direct practice, supervision, and teaching social work practice and research. For the last two years, I have worked as a research associate completing research studies related primarily to child welfare.

In spring 2007 I joined the BEAP team as part of a research practicum and have stayed on as a contributing member of the group. I plan to continue to participate as a

BEAP team member after graduation from my program and as a faculty member of the university I end up teaching in. I have not completed the BEAP assessment surveys as a student.

As a student of social work, an instructor in social work and a researcher in social work, I am extremely interested in the student experience and how social work programs educate future social workers. I also believe in holding individuals and programs accountable for ethical, rigorous practice that focuses on meeting the needs of clients and students. The BEAP instruments are tools which programs can use to not only meet accreditation standards but also use to assist in maintaining social work educational standards within the program. As a future faculty member the appropriate instruction of social work practice is important to me. I am an advocate for high quality social work practice, education and research. I believe in using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to answer research questions; however, for this study, a quantitative analysis will be completed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

"The cornerstone of the educational structures of the world is evaluation"
Mary Lovett Smallwood, 1935

Introduction

Social work programs are required to assess and monitor themselves in order to stay in compliance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) standards for accreditation. Since 1993, when CSWE introduced assessment as a specific standard for accreditation (Buchan, et al., 2004), social work programs have struggled to meet the standards (Ginther & Schroeder, 2004), and many programs have had trouble meeting outcome evaluation requirements (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). In 2001, CSWE reaffirmed assessment and evaluation when the new educational policies and accreditation standards (EPAS) were approved (Poulin, Silver, & Kauffman, 2007). In the spring of 2008, CSWE approved a new set of accreditation standards. Although the BEAP team developed the BEAP instruments prior to 2001, they were aware of the 2001 CSWE standards and were able to incorporate these standards into the instruments. Therefore, the current BEAP Exit Survey is based on the 2001 standards, however; it also fulfills much of the 2008 standards as well.

There are eight accreditation standards for the CSWE, 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Standard eight discusses programmatic assessment. Two components within this standard include: 1) the program assessment plan and procedures for evaluating outcomes, and 2) the program implementation plan to

evaluate the program's objectives and use of the outcome data to scrutinize and improve the program (CSWE, 2008; Poulin, et al., 2007; Rodenhiser, et al., 2007). CSWE does not give specific direction on how social work programs should be assessed or how data generated should be used (Poulin, et al., 2007; Rodenhiser, et al., 2007). Instead, faculty at each social work program must design an assessment process of their own.

The new, 2008 EPAS accreditation document, has four standards which include: (1) Program Mission and Goals; (2) Explicit Curriculum; (3) Implicit Curriculum; and (4) Assessment. Within these four standards are 10 primary competencies and 41 sub-competencies totaling 51 competencies. *Standard Four – Assessment* states, "Assessment is an integral component of competency-based education. To evaluate the extent to which the competencies have been met, a system of assessment is central to this model of education. Data from assessment continuously inform and promote change in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance attainment of program competencies" (CSWE, EPAS, 2008). Implicit curriculum addresses the context of social work education for example advising students and assessing how well prepared the student is to go out into the field. Explicit curriculum addresses the knowledge and skills needed by the student to be a social work practitioner.

The Baccalaureate Education Assessment Package (BEAP) was developed in 1999 in order to track students over time from entrance into a social work program to two years after graduation (BPD, n.d.). The package was developed by an assembled group of social work professors and directors with support from the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD, n.d.) Association (Buchan, et al., 2004). The BEAP package is a fee-based, copyrighted service available to all CSWE accredited and in-candidacy programs,

and currently includes four instruments: The BEAP Entrance Survey, The BEAP Exit Survey, The BEAP Employer Survey, and The BEAP Alumni Survey. The original package also included the Values Inventory, however this instrument is no longer offered (BPD, n.d.).

There are many questions that one could ask about social work program assessment. For instance, why do students appear to rate their educational experiences in such varied ways across programs, schools and the country? Second, why do students choose particular social work programs or universities in the first place? After many years of collecting data from baccalaureate social work programs, using the Exit and follow-up surveys, the BEAP committee has observed several patterns that warrant further research. Students appeared to be rating their academic experience differently based on a variety of factors. These factors included location of the university, size and type of the university, campus culture, auspice of the university and type of social work program (undergraduate or combined undergraduate and graduate programs). Lastly, was it the student's perception of their academic experience that is at the heart of these program evaluation results? This chapter provided an historical background on educational assessment, relevant theory, and provided context for each of the variables analyzed in the study.

Historical Background of Assessment

In 1935, Smallwood postulated the need for educators to become "more cognizant of the desire and necessity for critical analysis of educational values" (p. x). In the 1930's and 40's, the focus of student evaluation came from education and developmental

psychology (Ewell, 2002). Researchers at this time studied young college students ages 18-20, in academic, residential settings. In the 1960's and 70's, literature on student retention began to emerge (Ewell, 2002). Also, in the mid-1960's, researchers began studying student mastery of a subject (Ewell, 2002). This informed the beginnings of competency-based learning assessment, which, with agreed upon outcomes, assesses and certifies individual student achievement (Ewell, 2002).

In the 1970's, two additional contributions to assessment emerged. Mastery methods became an effective alternative to testing and measurement and researchers claimed that they could prove that higher education was not just theory based (Ewell, 2002). Ewell (2002) indicated, however, that the birth of the assessment movement occurred in 1985 at the First National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education. In the 1980's, college curricula came into question as several reports called for "coherent curricular experiences that could be shaped by ongoing monitoring of student learning and development" (Ewell, 2002, pp. 7-8). Also, during this time, several states began mandating colleges and universities to examine and report on learning outcomes. However, higher education has been assessing students in a variety of ways, from the time the first university opened its doors, through oral and written examinations and other student evaluative methods.

In 1642, Harvard University awarded nine men the first American Bachelor of Arts Degree (Rudolph, 1977). Education in that time period was restricted to men and, according to Rudolph (1977), "the burden of the curriculum was to facilitate the production of what society defined as a cultured gentleman; eventually a professional career in the United States would be unthinkable without a college course" (p. 8).

In 1701, according to Dressel and Lorimer (1961), Harvard University completed the first self-study of an institution and in 1935, Smallwood completed a qualitative study that examined three centuries of student assessment in five institutions within the United States: Harvard University, College of William and Mary, Yale University, University of Michigan, and Mount Holyoke College. Smallwood (1935) hypothesized that if an institution set up objectives, as a "basis of its foundation, then it will naturally attempt to measure its success in accomplishing them" (p. 2). She also theorized, "The supposition has been that the success of a college in accomplishing its aims could be indicated by evaluating intellectual ability and attainments of its students in the fields of learning offered" (p. 3).

The first evidence of student assessment was at Harvard University in 1646 (Smallwood, 1935). "Before his degree could be awarded, the student was required to prove his capability by certain scholastic attainments" which included "reading the old and new testament in Latin, leading an honest life and conversation, and keeping in mind the old and new testament" (p. 10). Oral evaluation began in England and continued in the United States, as a common practice, through the 19th century. Annual oral examinations were used at Harvard prior to 1790 and after written examinations were also introduced (Smallwood, 1935). Printed notes, question papers began in the 19th century (Smallwood, 1935). By the mid-1800's, written examinations became common in many forms.

Standards conceived by colleges and universities took the form of entrance requirements and degree regulations with these assessment standards originating "in the growth of evaluation methods" (Smallwood, 1935, p. 75). In 1770, at the College of

William and Mary, the first written standard was contained in the entrance requirements, which stated that students would be prepared for the "three learned professions by a classical training followed by some philosophy and science" (Smallwood, 1935, p. 75).

Smallwood's (1935) study found a variety of evaluation methods being utilized, and a "growing dissatisfaction with the efficiency of these methods" (p. 115). She indicates,

> The demands of evaluation became increasingly more insistent and more difficult to satisfy. One method after another was tried; each change was motivated by some external social, political, or economic variation in the world. This in turn has its effect on the kind and growth of legislation within the walls of the universities (p. 115).

History and Development of Assessment in Social Work Education

The history of assessment in social work is tied to the educational development of the profession within higher education. More than 100 years ago, prior to formal social work education, Mary Richmond proposed an educational direction for social work that would begin with the general principles of social work, and later specialization in a specific area of social work (Anderson, 1985; Shoemaker, 1998). This was the beginning of BSW and MSW educational objectives. At the BSW level, education is focused on generalist practice and at the MSW level education is concentrated on a particular population or area of practice (Anderson, 1985).

In 1898, the New York School of Philanthropy was established. This was the first school for training charity workers (Axinn & Levin, 1978; Ginsberg, 2005; Shoemaker,

1998); although, there is an argument that the University of Chicago was the first school of this type. By 1917, there were thirteen schools of applied philanthropy with each specializing in social administration, social economy or social work (Axinn, et al., 1978). "The schools reached for acceptable professional education, rather than vocational training, and tried to develop casework as a professional practice base" (Axinn, et al., 1978, pp. 145-146).

In 1919, the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work was formed (Baskind, Shank, & Ferraro, 2001; Ginsberg, 2005; Van Kleeck & Taylor, 1922). This was the earliest effort at setting and maintaining the quality of American social work education (Ginsberg, 2005). A pamphlet entitled, *The Profession of Social Work*, was created in 1921 by the Association of Training Schools. This pamphlet was helpful, for explaining to organizations hiring graduates, what social work entailed (Van Kleeck and Taylor, 1922). Van Kleeck and Taylor (1922) indicate that at the time of their article, "professional requirements" were being "worked out...through careful consideration by committees of leaders in the various specialized fields" (p. 161). The hope of Van Kleeck and Taylor (1922) was for "definite conceptions and standards of what constitutes a well-equipped and efficient practitioner" (p. 162). In 1927, the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work became the American Association of Schools of Social Work" (Ginsberg, 2005).

In 1923, James H. Tufts completed a study for the National Association of Schools of Social Work (NASSW) entitled, *Education and Training for Social Work*. This study attempted to define the field of social work and was the first step to professionalization (Axinn, et al., 1978). The Milford Conference in 1929, focused on

generic and specific social case work with the aim of delineating undergraduate and graduate social work (Anderson, 1985; Axinn, et al., 1978). "Practice is based on professional foundation knowledge, values, and skills which has specific applications formed by concrete realities such as different settings, and functions, the needs of the population served, the particularized situations of individuals, and the methods used in practice" (Anderson, 1985, p. 64).

In 1932, the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) agreed to a plan, with the federal government, that would increase the number of schools of social work, increase the number of students enrolled, and change curriculum within the social work programs. Government grants were available to support welfare programs and social workers, and they "helped shape social work education" (Axinn & Levin, 1978, p. 149). During the 1930's, it was also a requirement of the AASSW that schools of social work become part of the institutions affiliated with the Association of American Universities. The AASSW later established accreditation of social work programs offering graduate degrees (Ginsberg, 2005). At this time land grant universities took responsibility for undergraduate education of social workers, but did not meet criteria for the AASSW because they did not offer graduate social work programs (Axinn, et al., 1978). By 1945, there were 42 schools of social work enrolled in the AASSW (Axinn, et al., 1978).

In 1946, the National Association of Schools of Social Administration (NASSA) was formed due to the conflict between the AASSW and the undergraduate programs. Shortly after the NASSA was formed, several of the undergraduate schools belonging to this organization also began to grant graduate degrees. In 1952, the NASSA and

AASSW merged to become the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and became the accrediting body for graduate schools of social work (Axinn, et al., 1978; Baskind, et al., 2001). Throughout the 1950's, CSWE conducted studies regarding undergraduate social work education and what it should entail; however, these studies did not include specific educational objectives or an evaluation of student or program outcomes (Baskind, et al., 2001). Yet, in 1961, CSWE outlined specifics for the education of undergraduate students in, *Social Welfare Content in Undergraduate Education* (Axinn, et al., 1978), and in 1962, CSWE, in the *Official Statement of Curriculum Policy for the Master's Degree Program in Graduate Schools of Social Work*, introduced expectations for the development of goals, objectives, and procedures for evaluation (Baskind, et al., 2001). In 1969, CSWE restated their expectation of assessment by graduate schools of social work in a document entitled, *Curriculum Policy for the Master's Degree Program in Graduate Schools of Social Work* document (Baskind, et al., 2001).

By 1969, CSWE began to recognize undergraduate social welfare degree programs (Axinn, et al., 1978). Five years later, CSWE produced the *Standards for the Accreditation of Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Social Work*, which details expected objectives and outcomes for undergraduate social work programs (Baskind, et al., 2001). These new standards, for undergraduate programs, were closely modeled after the existing graduate program standards. In the mid-1970s, a study of undergraduate social work curriculum was completed by Baer and Federico (1978). From this study, ten competencies emerged for undergraduate social work education. These original competencies formed the basis for the undergraduate and graduate competencies of past and present accreditation standards (Baskind, et al., 2001).

Accreditation is the "primary means of quality control and assurance in much of American education...in social work education...the process...is a voluntary scheme and is done at the regional and national levels" (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 50). Accreditation began, in 1905, among medical schools. The primary goal, at this time, was to maintain the quality of education by ensuring "adequate resources were devoted to providing educational services" (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 51). Social work accreditation was originally conceived, not as the assessment of outcomes, but as the assessment of the educational endeavor (Raymond, 2003).

Each professional accrediting body is a member of the Council on Higher Education (CHEA) (Ginsberg, 2005), an organization that monitors accreditation entities in the United States (Zastrow & Reutebuch, 2004). Accrediting bodies must be able to meet and demonstrate that they are following CHEA principles of good practices, and shared responsibility in the creation and application of accreditation standards (Zastrow & Reutebuch., 2004). Each accrediting body is required, within their own standards, to "design and produce desired or needed educational outcomes for a profession and should refer to resources only to the extent required for graduates to emerge from programs intellectually prepared for their professional lives" (CHEA, 2001, p.1).

There are six regional accrediting bodies in the United States for colleges and universities, with each region of the country affiliated with one of these accrediting bodies. The purpose of the regional accrediting bodies is quality control of higher education programs (Ginsberg, 2005). However, these six accrediting bodies defer to specialized accrediting bodies, such as CSWE for the determination of the accredited status of professional programs (Ginsberg, 2005).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) continues to be the accrediting body for social work programs in the United States. However, not all social work programs are accredited through CSWE. Yet, the university, regional accrediting body will evaluate all social work programs regardless of their accreditation status with CSWE (Ginsberg, 2005). According to Ginsberg (2005), "all accrediting bodies have the approval of the United States Department of Education, so there is a direct connection between government and the accrediting process" (p. 51).

Approaches to Assessment in Social Work Education

The CSWE accreditation standards for social work programs has changed three times in the past 14 years. The changes in accreditation standards reflect the increasing pressure for programs to demonstrate their effectiveness (Buchan, et al., 2004; Garcia & Floyd, 2002), and the need for social work education to ensure students are receiving the best possible education that will assist them in meeting the needs of a shifting society. "Early accreditation standards seemed to focus more on what the curriculum provided; however, current standards emphasize what the student learned in the course of completing the curriculum" (Gibbs & Adkins, 2000, p. 346). Gibbs and Adkins (2000) also stated that assessing student and social work program outcomes "are not mutually exclusive categories of evaluation in BSW education" (p. 346). Student and program outcomes should not only be assessed independently, but triangulated with other data in order to demonstrate the most accurate results regarding the effectiveness of the social work program (Buchan, et al., 2004; Ginther & Schroeder, 2004). The current 2008 accreditation standards reflect this stance in standard 4.0.1, by suggesting programs use

"procedures, multiple measures, and benchmarks to assess the attainment of each of the program's competencies" (CSWE, EPAS, 2008, p.16).

Assessment is "the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (Palomba & Banta, 1999, p. 4). The aim of assessment is to produce evidence of student competence, and then to use this information to improve learning (Palomba, 2001). Competencies, according to Banta (2001), can be used "interchangeably with skills, learning objectives, or with expected learning outcomes" (p. 2). "Competence may be viewed as sitting 'atop the apex of a hierarchy of experiences that have currency for the learner'" (Jones & Voorhees, 2000, as cited in Palomba, et al., 2001). "At the base of the hierarchy, traits and characteristics provide the foundation for learning; they are the innate qualities on which learning experiences help to build skills, abilities, and knowledge – the next level of the hierarchy (Banta, 2001, p. 2). At the third level, competence is 'the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles' that are relevant to the task for which they are assembled" (Jones & Voorhees, 2000, as cited in Palomba, et al., 2001). Having students demonstrate competence is a way of assessing performance of the three levels. "To ensure that a student has attained competence, three items of information are needed: a description of the competence, a means of measuring the competence, and a standard by which the student may be judged as competent" (Banta, 2001, p. 2). In order to meet CSWE accreditation requirements, social work programs must assess the competency of their students, as well as the competency of their program.

Assessment and Measurement

There are three types of assessment commonly used in social work program evaluation. These include student-focused assessment, institution-focused assessment, and process-focused assessment (Hull, Mather, Christopherson, & Young, 1994). Most social work programs use a combination of these three types in order to document compliance with BSW program standards set forth by CSWE.

Student-focused Assessment

There are a variety of ways in which to assess student outcomes within a social work program. Types of student assessments include course evaluations, homework, tests, papers, presentations and class participation (Holden, Barker, Meenaghan, & Rosenberg, 1999). There are also standardized measures, such as self-efficacy scales (Holden et al., 1999) and/or the Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT).

Classroom assignments are another way to evaluate students. Adams (2004) indicated that by using this type of assessment, "student and faculty are engaged in assessment as an activity that directly benefits their own teaching and learning" (p. 47). Classroom assessment techniques improve instruction in the course and provides a "learner-friendly classroom environment that encourages active learning, metacognition, and critical thinking" (Adams, 2004, p. 57). In addition, classroom assessment techniques do not necessarily "require the buy-in" of the entire faculty, therefore, this allows individual faculty members who share excitement about this technique to begin creating a culture of assessment within the program (Adams, 2004).

Another way to assess student achievement is through the use of portfolios. Portfolios can be utilized by students to document achievement, progression of cognitive and skill acquisition, and the development of the professional self, as well as to explore and demonstrate mastery of the art of social work and generalist practice, to show integration of knowledge, to develop and perfect the ability to think critically, and to use as a résumé for seeking employment in the field (Gibbs, et al., 2000; Schatz, 2002). Portfolios can be utilized by faculty to determine if their teaching assignments are appropriate, to incorporate student self-assessment into their educational experience, to inform instructional and curricular decisions, to help students recognize learning as a cumulative process, to facilitate students' ownership of creative participation in learning, and to give students a voice (Gibbs, et al., 2000). Researchers agree that using student portfolios as one type of outcome assessment can assist in measuring the overall program itself (Gibbs, et al., 2000; Schatz, 2002).

Institution-focused Assessment

Program assessment occurs when faculty demonstrate how the program has achieved the outcomes established by CSWE (Gibbs, et al., 2000). Garcia and Floyd (2002) suggested that institution-focused measures address the global aspects of the social work program and the faculty within that program. Institution-focused measures include faculty-student ratios, reputation of the program, faculty scholarship, and faculty background and preparation (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). Even forty years ago, Dressel and Lorimer (1961) suggested the importance of institutional self-study on a continuing basis;

> In making such studies, the lack of relevant evidence on the operation, the impact of the colleges on students, and the impossibility of collecting all the necessary data at a moment in time when they are most needed have underlined the necessity of a continuing program of data collection and institutional research (pp. 393-394).

Process-focused Assessment

Process-focused assessment measures how a program works and how the activities within the program are implemented and operated (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). Process measurement can also include assessment of instruction, advising and policy effectiveness (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). Assessment of instruction includes student evaluations and/or peer review. Two measures of effectiveness utilized in the BEAP Exit Survey involve the areas of advising and development of social work knowledge, values, and skills. There is one multiple-part question which inquires about the quality of advising the student received, and there are approximately 12 questions each regarding the student's preparedness in the areas of social work knowledge, values, and skills.

Each of the above measures is important in the assessment of social work programs. Not only are they important in order to meet CSWE requirements for a BSW program, they are also important as a well-rounded collection of measures that ensure accountability and progression of the program (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2006).

Measurement in Social Work Education

There are multiple methods by which to measure social work program outcomes including "periodic alumni surveys, student course evaluations, focus group meetings

with students, passage rates on the certification exam, and evaluation by agency supervisors on the extent to which interns attain program objectives" (Zastrow & Reutebuch, 2004, p. 5).

Ginther and Schroeder (2004) implemented the Social Work Program Evaluation Model (SWPEM), a framework for assessment of BSW programs, at Minnesota State University. Employing quantitative and qualitative measures, this assessment model triangulates student outcome measures with other program data to provide an overall evaluation of the social work program. The SWPEM is manageable, thorough, effective and affordable, and provides a high degree of accountability to the social work program (Ginther & Schroeder, 2004).

In their study that examined the assessment practices of Columbia College, Virginia Commonwealth University, and College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas, Baskind, Shank and Ferraro (2001), found that faculty become confused over the terminology used in accreditation procedures, and that they have difficulty connecting program objectives to a framework of program assessment because of this confusion. The researchers report that several programs use multiple methods of measurement, but that they do not attach this measurement to a particular EPAS objective or competency.

Social work programs need to implement a "well-articulated" plan of assessment that meets BSW program objectives (Poulin, Silver, & Kauffman, 2007). By doing this, the social work program is ensuring the first steps of developing a "culture of assessment" that can eventually expand into a more comprehensive process (Buchan, et al., 2004; Poulin, Silver, & Kauffman, 2007).

Controversies of Assessment within Higher Education

There are four purposes to educational assessment: 1) to assure minimum standards of quality and content, 2) to identify and evaluate quality, 3) internal program planning and resource allocation, and 4) consumer information (Vaughn, 2002). These four purposes; however, are each associated with controversial issues. They include the reputation of the university, the resources attached to the university, the consumer educational gain, and the value of the education to the consumer.

Reputation

Prior to making a decision about which university to attend, students and their parents (the consumers) examine the quality of the potential university by considering the university's academic and vocational goals, affordability, institution size and location, as well as other factors (Vaughn, 2002). Without valid and reliable information about a university, it would be difficult to make a decision about which university to attend. Accreditation, as well as commercial rankings, can provide valuable information to the consumer. However, according to Vaughn (2002), accrediting bodies do not rank universities according to quality. Accrediting bodies ensure minimum standards of "educational completeness and quality with respect to the stated mission" of the university (Vaughn, 2002, p. 435).

The impact of university image and reputation on student (consumer) behavior is well recognized in the marketing world; although, there is little empirical evidence for this recognition (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001). The university reputation helps to "increase the organizations sales" (students applying to the university/tuition/fees), "its market

share, and to establish and maintain a loyal relationship with customers" (students and parents) (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001, p. 305). University reputation affects a student's choice in universities, and also has an impact on a student's decision to remain at the university for advanced studies (Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001).

University Resources

Four directions for reform directions needed in higher education: encouraging greater differentiation of institutions, providing incentives for public institutions to diversify sources of funding, redefining the role of government in higher education, and introducing policies explicitly designed to give priority to quality and equity objectives (El-Khawas, DePietro-Jurand, & Holm-Nielsen, 1998). The concern reported by El-Khawas, et al. (1998) include the overcrowding, deteriorating infrastructure, lack of resources for non-salary expenditures, and the decline in the quality of teaching and research activities at universities.

Academic accountability is the obligation to report how resources have been utilized at the university to further teaching, learning and public service. There is "more controversy over academic accountability than about legal/financial accountability" (Trow, 1996, p. 316).

Consumer Gain and Educational Value

According to Trow (1996), "education is a process pretending to have a measurable outcome" and that universities feel the need to "measure something in order to justify awarding degrees" (p. 321). Trow pointed out that universities have no control over student character, or life circumstances, and that, although the university has

influence on the student, this influence is not measurable. Others indicate that instead of using assessment as a means to determine successful completion of a program, assessment now has a wider range of functions that span across the learning process (Dochy & McDowell, 1997). Key elements in the assessment approach include reflection, feedback, and integration of learning and evaluation (Dochy & McDowell, 1997).

There is a place for student assessment in higher education. Students, as consumers of educational services, provide a significant service to universities in evaluating their educational experience (Pollitt, 1987). Universities can provide quality education through rigorous "internal reviews of quality" which can be "monitored through external audits" (Trow, 1996, p. 322). This internal approach to quality will provide true value to the student by ensuring that programs have a positive effect on those receiving the services of the program.

Education resides in a "demand-driven" market, with institutions attempting to find a balance between industry need and student preference (Dochy & McDowell, 1997). According to the researchers, students are now far more active in the evaluation of their educational achievement. "Institutions of higher education are increasingly having to compete with each other to recruit students, and as a result the needs and wishes of students are receiving more attention" (Dochy & McDowell, 1997, p. 281). Can students tell us if they have received a valuable education, and is it appropriate to use student perception surveys? Dochy and McDowell (1997) suggested that universities cannot just consider assessment as a means for determining program completion. Assessment should also be used as a means for examining the educational process and

instruction, in order to make meaningful change within programs. This will make the most of a student's potential success.

Controversies of Assessment within Social Work Education

As the development of social work education illustrated, there is a relatively long history of assessment. However, there are also controversies within social work education, related to the assessment and accreditation process, just as in higher education in general. Assessing program outcomes is "one of the most challenging tasks facing social work education" (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007, p. 100). This difficulty arises from a variety of sources, which include the reputation and resources of the school, the talent of the faculty within the school, faculty who are not trained in program assessment, a program without the tools to self-evaluate, and/or the amount of time and energy that it takes to prepare an accreditation package.

The accreditation and reaffirmation process is helpful, but can also cause bitterness among faculty (Baskind, et al., 2001). The researchers contended that some faculty perceive the process as "an intrusion" or as "judgmental with underlying possibilities for sanction or public disapproval" (p. 118). However, Baskind, et al. (2001) felt the dean or director of the program could influence the faculty's feelings about accreditation by "providing leadership to use the experience as an opportunity for growth and strengthening the profession" (p. 118). Others found that faculty can be disinterested in or apathetic towards the assessment process (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). The researchers indicated that social work programs do not receive adequate funding to measure program outcomes and that this, in turn, affects faculty feelings about the process. Banta (2007)

indicated that the best place to start assessment is with the faculty because they are the "key ingredient for any assessment initiative" (p. 1). Accreditation requirements, at all levels, involve faculty in the assessment process. Wright (2007) argued for the importance of speaking to faculty about assessment on their "home turf" and in their "own language." Wright (2007) speculated, "The assessment message would get through more readily if faculty were approached through their disciplines" (p. 8).

There are other controversial findings from a study completed by Garcia and Floyd (2002). The researchers' initial finding was the "over-reliance (within social work programs) on tools that focus on perceptions and attitudes", such as the BEAP surveys or course evaluations, and "on measures whose reliability and validity have been called into question" such as grades and student GPA (p. 380). Two other concerns noted in Garcia and Floyd's (2002) study were the allocation of resources for program assessment and the difficulty programs have in addressing evaluative standards.

The assessment of outcomes is an important activity for social work programs, but that other benefits of assessment can "either confirm the utility of existing curricula or revise those aspects that are problematic" (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007, p. 105). On a positive note, social work programs have been successful, according to Palomba and Banta (2001), at including assessment into the culture of their programs.

Still, there are additional controversies, and areas of difficulty, associated with assessment for accreditation or reaffirmation. First, is the importance placed on obtaining a degree from a CSWE accredited program. There are both proponents of advanced standing privilege, and those who do not believe programs should offer such privileges to

BSW students. A BSW degree, from an accredited school, allows a student to have advanced standing privilege, which reduces the amount of time necessary to then obtain an MSW degree (Ginsberg, 2005).

Several states do not allow social workers to obtain professional licensure without a degree from an accredited school (Ginsberg, 2005). "CSWE's educational standards and the state licensure boards have different goals" (Epple, 2007, p. 272). Epple's concern was that other professionals are provided with the fundamentals to apply for licensure and then must pass a bar exam to practice (law and medicine). She believed social workers should be under the same scrutiny. Banta (2007) likened social work to other disciplines, such as nursing, education, engineering and business. She stated, "the competence of graduates must be assured through licensure or certification because the influence of practitioners on public health and welfare is substantial" (p. 3). Accreditation of a social work program ensures that programs are teaching students in a manner fit to educate professional social workers and to protect the communities in which they will practice.

Lastly, several programs struggle to meet accreditation requirements (Ginther & Schroeder, 2004), while others struggle with developing useful program objective assessment measures (Hull, Mather, Christopherson, & Young, 1994). An issue that can cause difficulty in the evaluation process is the "lack of consensus over evaluation approaches and measurement outcomes" (Poulin, et al., 2007, p. 83). Poulin, et al. (2007) suggest that this issue can be overcome by "having a well-articulated and fully implemented assessment of the mandated BSW program objectives" (p. 97) in order to develop a culture of assessment (Buchan, et al., 2004; Poulin et al., 2007). Because there

are no set standards for assessing social work programs and outcomes, the programs must, therefore, devise their own methods for assessment or buy standardized measures to assist in the assessment process. The Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package (BEAP) is one set of standardized instruments that can be used to assess program objectives and assist programs in meeting CSWE accreditation standards (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach for this study comes from classic social work theory. Specifically, systems and environmental theories were utilized as the theoretical basis for this study in order to explain how and why students evaluate their social work programs in a particular manner (See Figure 1).

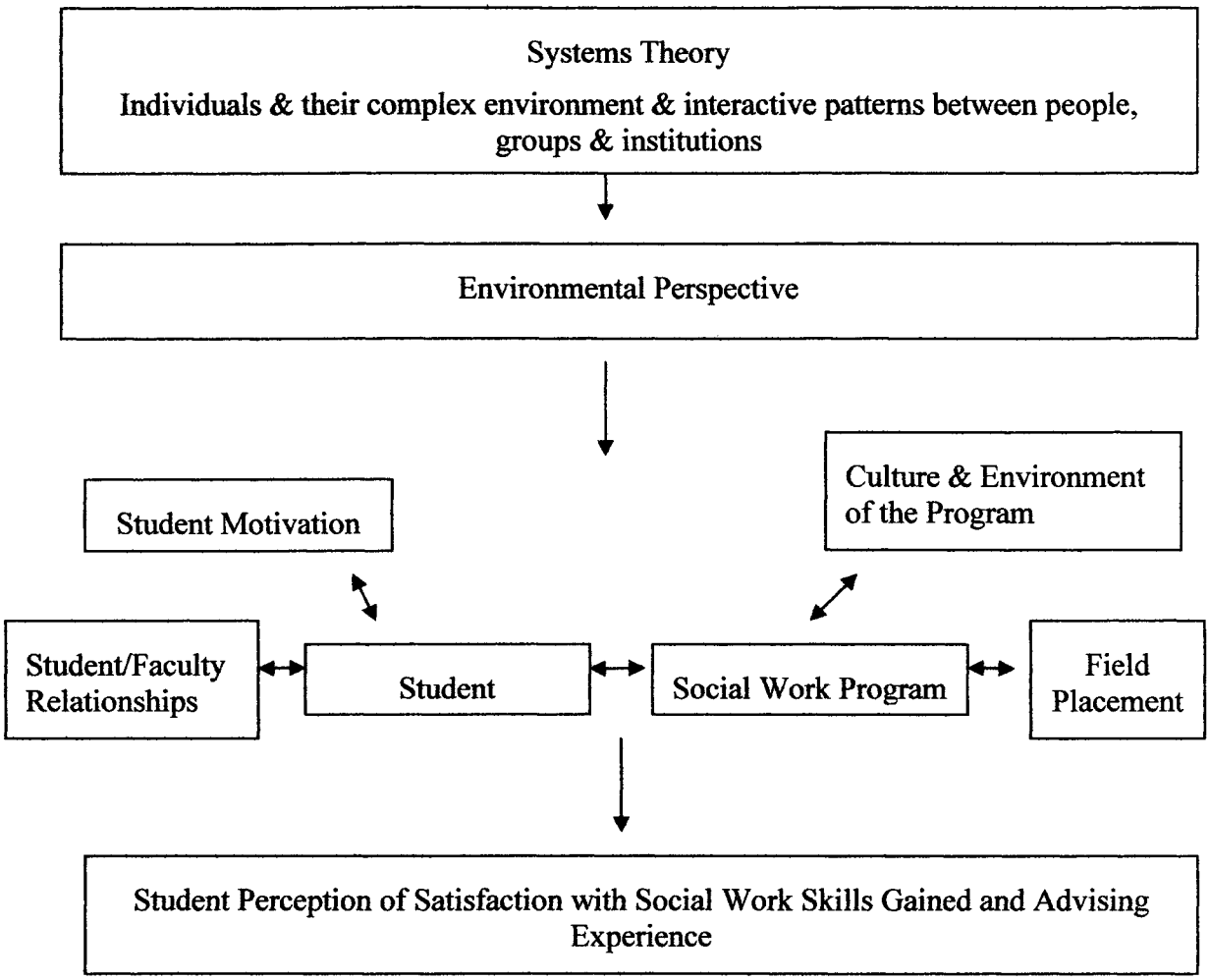

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework

Systems Theory

The conceptual background of systems theory is based in biology. Systems theory identifies and describes those systems, which function and interact with other systems (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2006; Walonick, 1993). Sheafor and Horejsi (2006) described a system as "an aggregate of interrelated and interconnected elements and activities that form an identifiable, organized, and functioning whole (p. 89). A system consists of numerous parts with each part having a symbiotic relationship with the others (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2006; Walonick, 1993). Systems theory is a way to examine individuals in their complex environment and observe the interactive patterns between people, groups and institutions (Systems Theory, 2008; Sheafor & Horejsi, 2006).

Environmental Perspective

The environmental perspective (also known as the ecological or person-in-environment perspective) can be traced back to the beginning of social work and has been central to social work practice (Cornell, 2006). This perspective views the individual in the context of his/her surrounding social systems (Systems Theory, 2008; Sheafor, et al., 2006; Johnson & Yanca, 2004).

> From a holistic view, people (and their biological, emotional, and social processes) and physical and social environments (and characteristics of those environments) can be fully understood only in the context of the relationship between and among them, in which individuals...and physical/social environments continually influence the operations of the other (Germain & Gitterman, 1996).

The environmental perspective does not take a linear approach to the explanation of the influence of the environment on an individual. An environmental perspective, recognizes that "given A, predicted effects on B may not necessarily follow, reflecting the interdeterminancy or unpredictability of complex human phenomena" (Germain & Gitterman, 1996, p. 7). Specifically, A and B have a reciprocal relationship rather than a linear or directional relationship (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). An environmental perspective informed this study in that the student's characteristics, the student's perception of the social work program and the student's interactions within the program influence the student's evaluation of the program.

Change Model

Although this study was based in systems and environmental theories, the BEAP instruments were derived for use as a social work program evaluation tool. "Program evaluation is applied research used as part of the managerial process. Evaluations are conducted to aid those who must make administrative decisions about human service programs. Unlike theoretical research...program evaluation systematically examines human services programs for pragmatic reasons" (Royce, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan (2006, p. 11).

The BEAP package was developed, as one form of evaluation, to assist social work programs with compliance of CSWE accreditation standards. Specifically, the BEAP instruments were developed based on the theory of change model (Buchan, V., personal communication, 2008). A theory of change helps one "identify the issue(s) the program will address, the participants involved, the target audience, the context in which the

program will take place, and the strategies that will be enacted to achieve specific outcomes" (PERC, n.d.). The theory of change model identifies what actions, with what people, and in what setting will produce what outcomes (PERC, n.d.). Specifically, social work programs should look at the needs of the program, make changes based on those needs, and then monitor and assess the impact of the changes on the program.

The BEAP instruments were "designed to provide regular program feedback from multiple consumers within a longitudinal timeframe that begins during the professional education process and continues for two years following graduation" (BEAP Handbook, n.d.). The information obtained from the assessment process allows programs to make decisions based upon empirical data (BEAP Handbook, n.d.). Using the BEAP instruments also allows social work programs the opportunity to monitor the impact of changes made in the program, such as curriculum, field instruction, and advising (BEAP Handbook, n.d.; Buchan, V., personal communication, 2008).

Student and Social Work Program Variables

In the following section, I have addressed the variables contained in the theoretical model and in each of the research questions, in an attempt to explain what has been completed by previous research and give an explanation as to why I completed the analysis of the BEAP Exit Survey data.

Student Characteristics

Student Motivation. "Individuals with high motivation to achieve are more likely to succeed in school and in careers" (Fortune, Cavazos, & Lee, 2005, p. 115). "Intrinsic motivation plays an important role in the educational process, facilitating learning and

achievement" (Fortune, Cavazos, & Lee, 2005, p. 116). Intrinsic motivation is "engagement in an activity for its own sake" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 245). Fortune, et al. (2005) found that "for students' self-rated social work skills, students rated their social work skills better if they valued their tasks more, had greater intrinsic motivation, and higher self-efficacy" (p. 122). Are students' motivated to choose and complete a social work education based on outside influence or is it strictly intrinsic motivation that spurs them to work toward a career in social work?

There are several important factors to consider in the discussion of student motivation and instructional practices. According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), "teaching practices affect student achievement" (p. 315) and role "models are important influences on student motivation" (p. 317). Therefore, ensuring effective teaching skills and teacher-modeling by faculty within the university setting will continue to motivate and promote the success of students.

Social work practicum satisfaction. There is an abundance of literature available on social work field placement, specifically as it relates to student satisfaction with their placements and educational experience. In 1993, Fortune and Abramson found that student satisfaction was related to their "perceptions of the quality of field instruction, the desirability of and involvement in the agency, and didactic explanations from the field instructor" (p. 95). They also found that "satisfaction with the circumstances of the learning environment can enhance student motivation and increase engagement in the learning process" (p. 95). In a later study, Fortune, McCarthy, and Abramson (2001) suggested that "the goal of social work education is competent performance in the role of

professional social worker"; however, "students' perceptions of their field placements are important as potential intermediate outcomes" (p. 112).

Other researchers agreed that student perceptions of their educational experience are important and contend that positive perceptions attract students to situations in which they learn (Cimino, Cimino, Nuehring, Raybin, & Wisler-Waldock, 1982). This could mean, however, that students report positive educational experiences in the field due to their positive perceptions going into the placement. Fernandez (1998) also studied satisfaction related to field placement and student perceptions of the factors associated with positive outcomes. "Student evaluation of university based courses and tutors play a significant role in academic decision making" and that "educators need to address the important element of satisfaction students derive from their experiential learning" (Fernandez, 1998, p. 173).

Educational satisfaction. There are mixed opinions regarding student satisfaction across disciplines. Some relate satisfaction to the school itself, the program, and faculty while others argue that satisfaction comes from within the student. Knox, Lindsay, and Kolb (1992) completed a longitudinal study of data from high schools and postsecondary undergraduate colleges in order to study student satisfaction. They found "weak and scattered effects of college characteristics on college satisfaction" (p. 310). Knox, et al. (1992) also reported that the "more education one has, the more one is satisfied with the academic aspects of the higher educational milieu and the more positive one is about the educational experiences there" (p. 320). School characteristics that were found to correlate with satisfaction, including sports and recreation facilities, grades, level of educational attainment, credentialing of the school, and career rewards. This assists in

strengthening the "attachments and loyalties to a school and its public image" (Knox et al., 1992, p. 322).

Students reflect positively on their educational experiences because the educational process or degree is perceived to open the door to higher social status (Meyer, 1977). This satisfaction is a result of the "allocating of power" that educational programs have in confirming personal knowledge [of the student] (Meyer, 1977, p. 74). Students who are satisfied with themselves are also satisfied with their environments (Gielow & Lee (1988, as cited in Okin & Weir, 1990). In their study, Gielow and Lee contended that student satisfaction is one of the most direct tests of school success. Given that individual students are the primary beneficiaries of the college experience, inquiring of them, as to how satisfied they are with those experiences is a way to measure success. Student satisfaction is an educational outcome over which universities have influence; therefore, they can control many of the factors related to receiving positive evaluations of their programs.

Pike (1991) studied the relationship between grades and student satisfaction by examining variables that could be of influence to them. He found that "satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on grades than grades exert on satisfaction" (p. 15). In his study, Pike postulated that student-faculty interaction is not directly related to grades, but is significant in the student experience. The characteristics that most influenced grades were previous high school grades and entering ability level. Pike (1991) concluded that grades and satisfaction are reciprocal.

In another study, Pike (1993) examined two models of perceived learning and satisfaction, which included the true relationship between learning and satisfaction and the relationship of an artifact of halo effect. The study found the artifact model to be the best representation of the study data. Pike suggested that "educational researchers and assessment practitioners should be careful in interpreting self-reports of learning and development, particularly as they relate to satisfaction with college. " (p. 23). His findings suggested that using self-reports of student educational satisfaction can give false accounts of satisfaction due to the "artifact of a constant error of the halo rather than the true relationship between satisfaction and dimensions of learning and development" (p. 38).

Hearn (1985) studied and found gender differences in satisfaction related to faculty contact, reporting that women valued faculty contact more than their male counterparts. However, quality of teaching and faculty knowledge were rated high among both genders. Hearn discussed his intent to measure student satisfaction from an "internal perspective, investigating the simultaneous interrelationships among the various aspects of student academic satisfaction" (p. 431).

Bean and Bradley (1986) studied academic performance and its relationship to student satisfaction. They "did not find that performance had a strong positive effect on satisfaction" (p. 408). However, one notable limitation in this study is "overrepresentation of students with higher GPA's" (p. 408). "GPA and school fit were significantly more likely to affect satisfaction for women than men" (p. 409). Bean and Bradley also found that "the causes of satisfaction differ for men and women and only for

women is the relationship between GPA and satisfaction statistically significant" (p. 410).

Another study explored student satisfaction of undergraduate programs based on differences of race. Einarson and Matier (2005) found that gender was not significantly correlated with satisfaction. Additionally, they found a positive correlation between satisfaction and "aspirations of post-baccalaureate education" specifically for White and African-American students (p. 668). Second, they found satisfaction to be related to overall quality of instruction and social involvement across all races. Also, faculty availability outside of class was found to be important for White and Asian-American students, but not Latino or African-American students. Furthermore, "grades and perceived intellectual development were significant correlates of overall satisfaction for seniors of all races" (p. 670). The key strategies for improving the educational experience of all races include "improving the quality of undergraduate instruction and strengthening students' sense of belonging on campus" (Einarson & Matier, 2005, p. 670).

Principles of adult learning also reinforce the importance of relationships between students and faculty. Informal, mutually-respectful relationships between student and instructor, collaboration in assessing, planning and evaluating learning objectives and experiential learning activities are all important to the adult learning process (Davenport & Davenport, 1988). Also, students preferred instructors who were friendly, process-oriented, non-directive and respectful (Krause & Allen, 1988). Satisfaction within programs was greater if students participated in planning their learning tasks and if their ideas were encouraged by faculty (Fortune, et al., 1985). Adult learners also appreciate

structure with clear, prescribed expectations and, oftentimes, sequenced steps for learning. Several studies have shown student preference for clear expectations and goals, feedback and the connection of theory and practice (Curiel & Rosenthal, 1987; Fortune et al., 1985; Hartung 1982; Morris & Haas, 1984). Lastly, students want a greater variety of learning activities, which is also associated with higher satisfaction (Fortune et al., 1985; Raskin, 1982). The "linkage of learning activities with classroom content may also affect student satisfaction because it enhances the integration of theory and practice" (Fortune & Abramson, 1993, p. 97).

Academic Advising

Relationships between faculty and student. Many researchers have found that student relationships with faculty are particularly important in the educational process. There are indications that these relationships are "profound" and will have a "life-long impact" on the student (Baldino, 1998; Metz, 1995). Icard, Spearmon, and Curry-Jackson (1996) called attention to the importance of professors sharing their knowledge and assisting students in acquiring the values of the social work profession, as well as, understanding the responsibilities of becoming a social worker. The sharing of this knowledge and value system can invoke positive feelings from the students, in turn affecting evaluations of the academic program.

Endo and Harpel (1982) conducted a study in which student-faculty interaction on both intellectual and personal/social levels, was examined as it related to the students' satisfaction of their educational experience. They postulated that "faculty need to be reminded how important they are in the overall impact of college on student outcomes"

(p. 133). The frequency of interaction is not enough; the interaction must be one of quality, as well. Friendly and personal contact, helpfulness and accessibility are other important faculty characteristics that are discussed by the researchers as affecting student outcomes (Endo & Harpel, 1982).

In her doctoral dissertation on small colleges and adult learners, Lavin (1992) found statistically significant correlations between student satisfaction and college services provided. Flexible faculty, who were responsive to the needs of students, was found to be a predictor of student satisfaction. Students surveyed for this study reported the importance of helpfulness of faculty, making curriculum content practical for the real world, being available to students, and being inspiring and flexible.

Other important aspects of the student-faculty relationship experience include "empowering educational experience to facilitate personal and social change" (Lazzari, Banman, & Jackson, 1996, pg. 133), and sustaining inventive methods for effectively delivering curriculum (Beechum & Comstock, 1997; Lazzari, Banman, & Jackson, 1996; Michaud, Sontag, & Smiar, 1996). The relationship developed between a student and a professor can increase the student's satisfaction with his/her educational experience. Fernandez (1998) pointed out that "student satisfaction with the learning experience is a precondition for the achievement of desired behaviors" (p. 173). In the case of evaluating social work programs, ensuring student satisfaction, increases the likelihood of a positive evaluation outcome for the program.

Social Work Program Characteristics

College type. "Student development and curriculum development are two facets of BSW social work education that are of interest because of their particular impact on educational outcomes" (Drumm & Suppes, 2000, p. 2). The researchers reported that small social work programs have much strength including the "amount of individualized attention given to students, quality of advisement offered to students, amount of interaction with students in the classroom, knowledge of student's academic strengths and weaknesses, responsiveness to individual student needs, and amount of faculty liaison interaction with field instructors" (Drumm & Suppes, pg. 3). Icard, et al. (1996) focused on historically African-American colleges and suggested that small, African-American colleges, and the lower student enrollments in these programs, were factors that contributed to the preparation of African-American students for entry-level, professional social work practice. Icard et al. (1996) stated that small social work programs are a benefit to students as they allow a more personal relationship to develop between student and professor.

Pintrich and Schunk (2002) also discussed the importance of college size in relation to motivation of students. They reported differences, between large and small schools on the challenges that can occur. Large schools are usually divided by departments, favoring loyalty and responsibility to a particular department rather than the school itself. Also, communication in larger schools is affected by size, as well as the more formal atmosphere in regards to norms and goals. Smaller schools, on the other hand, may have more cohesiveness in these areas, allowing clear communication and consistency as well as giving the students a more welcoming feeling. The feelings

students have about their educational experience directly affects the evaluations they complete in regard to that experience.

Summary

More often than not, social work programs find that evaluation of their own practices can be daunting and time consuming. This study analyzed the characteristics of, and relationships between, BSW students and social work programs at which the BEAP exit survey has been utilized. Research is limited around social work program evaluation and the need for assessment to meet accreditation standards. Program evaluation is of interest as a means by which to inform accreditation, recruitment and retention of students and curriculum assessment within social work programs. Program evaluation is also important for accountability purposes within social work programs. As Ewell (2002) stated, competency-based learning, with agreed upon outcomes, is the basis for assessing and certifying individual student achievement within social work programs. The 2008 EPAS is based on student competencies. Social work programs will now have to build in these measures in order to fully evaluate their programs. This study seeks to provide meaningful data about social work students and programs, and the relationships that may exist between them.

This study intends to make contributions to the field of social work in several ways. The first contribution is to the BEAP team and the programs that participate in the BEAP assessment program. Through the dissemination of the results of this study, the BEAP team will gain additional findings from the data they have collected and social work programs will have a better understanding of the students they serve, as well as the

program's impact on its students. Lastly, the implications of this study may also assist social work programs in the preparation of their accreditation packages, as well as inform programmatic changes. In 1935, Smallwood reported about the influence of curriculum on the measurement of student achievement. It is interesting that so many years ago, Smallwood stated, that as America changed, the nature of curriculum and educational aims changed. Today, evaluators of higher education have similar sentiments, striving to make the educational experience a positive one for students which will yield the skills and knowledge they need to go out into the workplace.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The BEAP team observed several patterns in the data they have collected that warranted further research. The team completed statistical testing (t-tests & Anova) of the data, which indicate students appear to be rating their academic experience differently based on a variety of factors. These differences included location of the university, size and type of the university, campus culture, auspice of the university and type of social work program (undergraduate or combined undergraduate and graduate programs). Was it the student's perception of their academic experience which is at the heart of these program evaluation results? This chapter describes the methodology, research questions, and the data analysis procedures used in this study.

Methodology

Design

The design for this study is a quantitative, non-experimental, secondary data analysis using descriptive and regression analysis. A longitudinal approach was not used due to the inability to match students from entrance into a social work program to exit from the program. A quantitative research study is a "disciplined inquiry" that is "systematic in nature" with "guidelines of how the research is to be carried out" (Morgan, Gliner, & Harmon, 2006, p. 9). Secondary data is existing information that can be reexamined for relevance in a new study (Royse, et al., 2006). The secondary data

analyzed in this study is the BEAP Exit Survey which was data obtained from the BEAP assessment package from the Baccalaureate Program Directors Association. This researcher acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses in using a secondary data base and will ensure that the data is used in a manner that is true to the purpose of why the data was collected.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected as part of the BEAP program evaluation package which seeks to provide BSW programs with reliable information that can be used to evaluate, improve and enhance their programs. BSW programs that are interested in better understanding of their student's perceptions about their program contract with the BEAP team to supply the BEAP package, score the instruments, enter the data into the data base, analyze instruments, and provide outcome information to the program on their on-line feedback site (BPD).

Individual programs are responsible for administering and collecting the data in an ethical fashion and then submitting the BEAP instruments to be scored. Programs administer the BEAP exit survey in the last semester prior to the senior BSW's graduation (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007). The BEAP exit surveys are mailed to the University of Utah and the instrument is scanned and merged into an existing database of national BEAP instruments. "The cumulative overall database, which includes the data of all participating universities, is updated periodically" (Rodenhiser, et al., 2007, p. 103). A letter of permission to use the database for research purposes was solicited and received from the BEAP group members by this researcher (Appendix A). Approval for

this study was obtained from the Office of Regulatory Compliance at Colorado State University (Appendix B).

Survey Instrument

The BEAP Exit Survey, as stated above, is one of four surveys that programs can purchase to assist in meeting accreditation standards set forth by CSWE. "BEAP instruments are intended to help social work programs answer three major program monitoring questions: 1) Are we delivering the program we say we are?, 2) Are we delivering the program to whom we say we are?, and 3) What is the perception of the students of program process and climate? (p. 9). BEAP recommends adding "additional measures to fully comply with the CSWE standards" (BEAP Handbook, 2007, p. 10).

The Exit survey has two forms, a customized scantron sheet for answering questions and a ten-page questionnaire. The Exit survey questionnaire has extensive questions that include demographic information, undergraduate educational experience (GPA, financial aide, advising), description of current employment, description of current primary social work position, post-graduate educational plans, evaluation of social work preparation in the areas of knowledge, values and skills, and professional activities. The Exit Survey is a copy-righted instrument; therefore, a copy of the instrument is not included in this study. However, the following are examples of questions which can be found in the instrument.

- An example of a student demographic question is: A1 – What is your current grade point average at graduation? This is a two-part question answered by checking off a GPA answer on the scantron sheet.

- An example of an advising question is: A7 - Please rate the quality of advising you received during your BSW/BA in social work education: course selection and curriculum planning, career planning, and professional advising. This question uses a 0-10 point Likert scale to answer all three areas of advising. There are three separate answers which are marked on the scantron sheet.

The three important sections of the BEAP Exit Survey are the measures of social work knowledge, skills, and values. In each of these sections, the student is asked to rate their preparedness for future social work practice. There are 12 questions in the knowledge section, 13 questions in the skills section and 10 questions in the values and ethics section.

- An example of a knowledge question is: D1 – Rate your knowledge of theories about clients of diversity.
- An example of a skills question is: D13 – Rate your skills in applying interventions that include issues about diversity to specific client situations. This question uses a 0-10 point Likert scale and is marked on the scantron sheet.
- An example of a value or ethics question is: D26 – Rate your values or ethics in respecting the dignity of clients.

Along with demographic, advising, knowledge, skills, and value questions there are also 6 undergraduate educational experience questions, 15 questions regarding the student's current employment, 6 questions about post graduate educational plans, 4 professional activity questions, and 6 demographic questions (including E1 listed above).

Reliability Measures of the BEAP Exit Survey

The BEAP Exit Survey is not an instrument that measures a few specific concepts but asks for a variety of data, from the student, about the social work program (Buchan, V., Personal communication, 2008). Buchan, et al. (2004) report "excellent reliability for each of the BEAP instruments" with the Exit Survey producing "alpha scores of 0.91 or higher on the scales covering knowledge, skills and values" (p. 250). However, Cronbach α alone does not address the reliability of the instrument (Morgan, Gliner, & Harmon, 2006). As well as high Cronbach α scores, the BEAP team has observed consistent scores on the Exit Survey since inception of the instrument in 2000. Although, measurement error should be considered in all surveys, the consistency of the BEAP Exit Survey has remained constant.

BEAP Exit Survey Sample

The current BEAP database consists of 89,410 student evaluations from the six BEAP survey instruments. The selected sample of exit survey data was obtained from the BEAP database from 2000 to 2007. The sample contains information collected from programs ($N = 203$) that participated in using BEAP surveys and students ($N = 16,996$) who completed the BEAP Exit survey. This is a convenience sample of all BSW programs in the United States; however, the data collected is from the whole population of those who chose to use the BEAP Exit Survey. The programs in this study have elected to buy and use the BEAP instruments for program evaluation. Programs not included in this analysis have chosen to evaluate their program with other assessment

tools and have not participated in the BEAP program. Both the student and social work program identifiers are removed from the data to ensure anonymity.

Variables

Student variables. The students who have completed the BEAP Exit Surveys are senior, bachelor level social work students. The students vary in age, gender, and ethnicity as well as other demographics. The variables available for use in this study analysis are listed below in Table 1. Students who have completed the exit survey have not provided information that can identify them individually; therefore, student identity is anonymous.

Table 1
Student Predictor Variables

Measure	Definition and Operationalization
GPA	An ordinal measure defined as the self-reported current overall GPA of the student during the time the student completed the exit survey with a .0 to 4.0 range.
Gender	A dichotomous measure dummy coded as, 1 for female and 2 for male.
Disability	A dichotomous measure defined as any physical, speech, medical or disabling impairment the student may have. This variable was coded as 1 for yes and 2 for no.
Age	An ordinal measure based on the day, month and year the student was born. This variable was converted to a specific age prior to analysis using the date the survey was collected.

Social work program variables. The social work programs in this study consist primarily of small programs. They are either bachelor level or bachelor and master level programs. The programs are located in public, private, and private denominational universities. The programs have paid for the use of the BEAP instruments and have

contributed to the database by submission of their data. Programs will not be individually identified, but rather grouped anonymously, using auspice type, or BPD region. For the purposes of this study, region 1 will be titled Southeast, region 2 will be titled Mideast, region 3 will be titled Southwest, region 4 will be titled Midwest, region 5 will be titled West, and region 6 will be titled Northeast.

Table 2
Social Work Program Predictor Variables

Measure	Definition and Operationalization
Program type	A dichotomous measure defined as a program that offers only a BSW or a program that offers a combined BSW and MSW, dummy coded as 1 for BSW program and 2 for combined programs.
Program auspice	A nominal measure defined as a public, private denominational, or private nondenominational social work program, coded as 1 for public, 2 for private denominational, and 3 for private nondenominational.
# of Students graduating	An ordinal measure defined as the reported number of students who graduated in the social work program during time the Exit Survey was administered. This variable is divided into 5 specific categories ranging from 0-152. This variable will serve as a proxy for program size.
BPD Region	A nominal measure defined as the location in the country that a university is located, designated by CWE. These six regions include: Region 1 (AL, AR, MS, GA, FL, SC, LA, NC, TN) Southeast Region 2 (OH, WV, VA, PA, KY, MD, DE, DC) Mideast Region 3 (KS, NE, TX, NM, AZ, CO, UT, OK) Southwest Region 4 (IA, MN, WI, IL, MO, IN, ND, SD, MI) Midwest Region 5 (HI, AK, WA, CA, ID, NV, WY, MT, OR) West Region 6 (NY, NJ, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME) Northeast Region 1 will be coded as 1, region 2 as 2, region 3 as 3, region 4 as 4, region 5 as 5 and region 6 as 6.

Outcome variables. The outcome variables in this study pertain to particular questions in the Exit Survey. These variables are interval measures that are evaluated by the student using a 0-10 point Likert scale. On the scale a "0" is very poor and "10" is

superb with poor, adequate, good and very good in between. The first three questions/variables ask the student to rate the quality of advising the student received during their program. These three questions include course selection and curriculum planning, career planning and professional advising. The fourth question/variable asks the student to rate how well the program prepared the student for additional education. The remaining questions/variables pertain to skills the student may or may not have gained during their education. The questions/variables from the exit survey to be used are listed below in Table 3.

This study aims to answer the following research questions about the 203 BSW programs that have completed the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000 through 2007. The explanatory variables (predictor or independent) in this study are student characteristics (Table 1) and social work program characteristics (Table 2). The response (outcome or dependent) variables in this study are the 13 skills questions and the three advising questions on the BEAP Exit Survey (Table 3). The research questions are grouped by the response variables; questions 1 and 2 ask for a description of all of the independent and dependent variables including CSWE national data variables, questions 3 and 4 relate to the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey, and questions 5 and 6 relate to the advising questions in the BEAP Exit Survey.

Table 3
BEAP Exit Survey Outcomes for Student Satisfaction of Obtained Skills and Advising Experience

Question
A. Quality of advising student received during program:
1. Course selection and curriculum planning
2. Career planning
3. Professional advising
B. Evaluation of social work skills preparation:
1. Applying interventions that include issues about diversity to specific client situations
2. Demonstrating professional use of self with clients
3. Applying generalist interventions in practice with client systems
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories in interventions with individuals
5. Analyzing the impact of social policies on client systems
6. Using generalist knowledge to influence organizational policies
7. Evaluating research studies
8. Applying the findings of research studies to practice
9. Evaluating practice with supervision
10. Using communication skills based on needs related to diversity and different abilities
11. Using supervision in practice
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies
13. Seeking necessary organizational change with supervision

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale. All of these questions are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Research Questions

1. a. What demographic qualities, including gender, age, GPA, and disability describe the student population that participated in the BEAP Exit Survey from2000-2007?

   b. How do these Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for age and gender?

2. a. What program qualities including program type, auspice, number of students graduating, and region, describe the programs participating in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000-2007?

   b. How do these Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for program type, auspice and size?

3. a. How do students rate each of the social work skills on the BEAP Exit Survey?

   b. How do students rate social work skills overall, broken down by student and program demographic variables?

4. a. How do students rate the quality of advising received in their social work program on the BEAP Exit Survey?

   b. How do students rate the quality of advising overall, broken down by student and program demographic variables?

5. How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?

6. How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?
7. How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?
8. How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?

Statistical Analysis

The researcher completed a visual inspection of the BEAP Exit Survey data base prior to delving into statistical analysis. Several variables were recoded in the data base to create dummy variables and groups. Groups were created according to CSWE 2006 breakdowns in order to compare BEAP Exit Survey data to CSWE data. Student disabilities were recoded into a 'yes' or 'no' disability column and the year in which the Exit Survey was completed by the student was re-coded into a new column with dummy variables.

A preliminary approach to the analysis of the BEAP Exit Survey data was taken in order to understand the data more thoroughly. Descriptive statistics were run on each of the variables in this study. A total of 16,996 students participated in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000 through 2007. In this sample of students, 89.9% were female and 9.8% were males with a mean age of 27.8 years-old. The students who completed the

Exit Survey had an average overall GPA of 3.3. The majority of the students reported no disability (71.9%). Programs that use the BEAP Exit Survey tend to be small with 35 graduating students on average. They also tend to be public (67.6%), undergraduate (74.0%) programs.

After preliminary analysis, the researcher ran cross-tabulations of student and program variables with survey skill questions and advising question variables. The results were examined for relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. The results were recorded in tables.

Specific variables were chosen for use in multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis was used to answer research questions 5 through 8. In these research questions, the researcher was looking for variables from student and program demographics that would predict how students rate their social work skill preparation and advising experiences.

Multiple regression is a statistical analysis used to examine multivariate relationships between explanatory variables (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). After the regressions were run, the researcher visually inspected the output, specifically examining the multiple correlation coefficient (R) and the adjusted R^2. R is "equivalent to the Pearson correlation between the actual, or observed, values and the predicted values on the dependent variable" (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, pp. 167-168). R determined how much information about the dependent variable was contained in the combination of independent variables. R^2 is the "proportion of dependent variable variance that can be explained by the combination of the independent variables" (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002,

p. 169). The β's or partial coefficients, were examined to distinguish what combination of variables have relatively more weight for predicting student feedback in the areas of skills and advising (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). The root mean squared error (RMSE) was examined and compared to the standard deviation of the outcome variables. RMSE is a measure of how close a fitted line is to data points. The RMSE is the square root of the mean square error. It has the same units as the quantity plotted on the vertical axis and is the distance, on average, of a data point from the fitted line, measured along a vertical line. The RMSE is a measure of goodness of fit (Vernier, 2009).

The use of multiple regression allowed for the prediction of a dependent variable from a combination of several independent/predictor variables. Thus, enabling the determination of which student and program variables, or combination of these variables, predicted student feedback in the areas of skills and advising preparation on the BEAP Exit Survey.

Assumptions were also considered prior to running regression analysis. The multicollinearity of the predictor variables were evaluated by visually inspecting the correlations between the variables. Multicollinearity occurs when the predictor variables are highly correlated with one another (Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Morgan, et al., 2006). The social work skill question variables and the advising experience variables were all highly correlated. Mean scores were used for social work skills and advising questions to compute regressions. Assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were tested, keeping in mind that not all assumptions are equally important; for example, the assumption of normality. None of the assumptions were violated and the researcher computed parametric statistics such as Pearson *r*.

Summary

Chapter 3 has detailed this study's methodology including the initial descriptive statistics of the data. The BEAP Exit data used in this study spanned from 2000-2007 and included national social work program data from programs which participated in using the BEAP Exit survey during that time frame

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The design for this study was a quantitative, non-experimental, secondary data analysis using descriptive and regression analyses. The BEAP Exit Survey data from 2000-2007 was used to examine how students in social work programs rate their advising experience and social work skill level at the time of graduation from their BSW program.

The BEAP Exit Survey has two forms, a customized scantron sheet for answering questions and a ten-page questionnaire. The exit survey questionnaire has extensive questions that include demographic information, undergraduate educational experience (GPA, financial aide, advising), description of current employment, description of current primary social work position, post-graduate educational plans, evaluation of social work preparation in the areas of knowledge, values and skills, and professional activities.

The selected sample of Exit Survey data contains information collected from programs ($N = 203$) that participated in using BEAP surveys and students ($N = 16{,}996$) who completed the BEAP Exit survey. This is a convenience sample of all BSW programs in the United States; however, the data collected is from the entire population of those who chose to use the BEAP Exit Survey. This chapter describes the results of each research question with an interpretation of the analysis and tables. Research question one and two will be presented first, followed by research questions five through

eight, involving multiple regressions, and then research questions three and four, the descriptive analyses.

Results by Research Question

(1a) What demographic qualities, including gender, age, GPA, and disability, describe the student population that participated in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000-2007?

In order to determine the student demographic qualities of the BEAP Exit Survey data, descriptive statistics were run on each of the student variables; gender, age, overall GPA, and disability. A total of 16,996 students participated in the Exit Survey from 2000 through 2007. As indicated in Table 4, students were comprised of 89.9% females and 10.1% males with a mean age of 27.8 years-old. The majority (64.5%) of students were 25 years-old or younger.

Table 4
Exit Survey Student Data: Age and Gender by Student (N=16,996)

Measure	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Age			
25 & under	10023	59.0	64.5
26-30	1826	10.7	11.7
31-40	1872	11.0	12.0
41 & over	1820	11.7	11.7
Missing	1455	8.6	-
Gender			
Female	14897	87.7	89.9
Male	1665	9.8	10.1
Missing	434	2.6	-

Students who completed the Exit Survey had overall GPA's, mostly (76.5%) above a 'B' average. The overall average GPA was 3.3. As noted in Table 5, the majority (78%) of the students had no disability.

Table 5
Exit Survey Student Data: Overall GPA and Disability Status (N=16,996)

Measure	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
GPA			
1.0-2.4	317	1.9	2.7
2.5-2.9	2448	14.4	20.8
3.0-3.4	4688	27.6	39.8
3.5-3.9	4158	24.5	35.3
4.0	162	1.0	1.4
Missing	5223	30.7	-
Disability			
No	12219	71.9	78.0
Yes	3522	20.7	22.0
Missing	1255	7.4	-

(1b) How do the Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for age and gender?

In order to compare the Exit Survey data to national student and program data, CSWE data was obtained from the annual CSWE 2006 Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States booklet. Table 6 details a comparison of Exit Survey data with gender and age data cross tabulations to the CSWE gender and age data cross tabulations. The Exit Survey had 1,487 (8.8%) missing. The CSWE 2006 data had 2,557 (9.5%) unknown. Both unknown and missing data were treated as missing in this study. Visual inspection of the data indicates that the age and gender distributions of the BEAP Exit Survey data and CSWE data are quite similar. It should be noted that the Exit

Survey data spans eight years (2000-2007); whereas, the CSWE data is one year (2006). Additionally, CSWE information is for junior and senior full-time students in 2006 and Exit Survey data are for the total number of graduating seniors from 2000-2007 who completed the BEAP Exit Survey.

Table 6
Exit Survey (N=15,509) and CSWE (n=24,607) Student Data Comparisons for Age and Gender by Valid Percent

	Male		Female		Total	
Age	Exit	CSWE	Exit	CSWE	Exit	CSWE
25 & under	4.7	6.7	59.7	61.8	64.4	68.5
26-30	1.6	1.9	10.1	10.4	11.7	12.3
31-40	1.6	1.7	10.3	9.0	11.9	10.7
41 & over	1.9	1.5	9.7	7.1	11.6	8.6
Total	9.8	11.8	89.8	88.3	100.0	100.0

Note: Statistics adapted from CSWE (2006). CSWE data is from 2006 Jr. and Sr. BSW students, while Exit data is from 2000-2007, Sr. BSW students.

(2a) What program qualities including program type, auspice, number of students graduating, and region, describe the programs participating in the BEAP Exit Survey from 2000-2007?

In order to determine the program demographic qualities of the Exit Survey data, descriptive statistics were run on each of the program variables: type, auspice, size and BPD region. As shown in Table 7, almost half of the programs that participated in the use of the BEAP Exit Survey were small in size and BSW only, with more than half of those being at denominational colleges. However, more than half the programs were

located in a public college. Large, combined programs do not tend to use the BEAP Exit Survey to measure program outcomes.

Table 7
Exit Survey Programs by Type, Auspice, and Size (N=203)

	Public	Private D	Private ND	Total
BSW Only (*N=167*)				
0-24	20	53	24	97
25-49	40	5	4	49
50-74	13	2	-	15
75-99	3	-	1	4
100+	2	-	-	2
Combined (*N=36*)				
0-24	2	1	3	6
25-49	15	1	1	17
50-74	8	-	-	8
75-99	3	-	-	3
100+	2	-	1	2

Note: the information for this table was taken from the BEAP Excel spreadsheet used by the BEAP team for accounting purposes. Private-D=private denominational institutions, Private-ND=private non-denominational institutions.

(2b) How do these Exit Survey demographics compare to the national CSWE sample for program type, auspice and size?

Table 8 presents the Exit Survey social work program data and CSWE national program data by program count for social work program auspice. Exit Surveys have

been completed by approximately half (44.0%) of the accredited BSW social work programs nationally. The CSWE data is missing 57 programs in their data.

Table 8
Exit Survey (N=167) and CSWE (N=401) Social Work Program Counts by BSW Program Auspice

	Frequency		Valid Percent	
	Exit	CSWE	Exit	CSWE
Public	78	257	46.7	64.0
Private	89	144	53.2	35.9
Missing	36	57	-	-
Total	203	458	100.0	100.0

Note: Statistics adapted from CSWE (2006). CSWE data is from 2006 Jr. and Sr. BSW students, while Exit data is from 2000-2007, Sr. BSW students.

Table 9 is a comparison of Exit Survey and CSWE data by program size. Although the percentages are somewhat similar, programs which use the Exit Survey tend to be smaller programs, which is evident in the table. Please note that CSWE national data reflects enrolled fulltime junior and senior students for one year; whereas, BEAP Exit Survey data reflects graduating seniors for eight years.

Table 9
Exit Survey (N=16,662) and CSWE (N=27,187) Social Work Program Size

	Frequency		Valid Percent	
Program size	Exit	CSWE	Exit	CSWE
0-24	6195	5564	37.2	20.5
25-49	6580	7975	39.5	29.3
50-74	2863	4988	17.2	18.3
75-99	778	3727	4.7	13.7
100 & Over	246	4933	1.5	18.1
Missing	334	192	-	-

Note: Statistics adapted from CSWE (2006). CSWE data is from 2006 Jr. and Sr. BSW students, while Exit data is from 2000-2007, Sr. BSW students.

There were 458 accredited BSW programs in the United States in 2006 (CSWE, 2006). Table 10 indicates the comparison of CSWE accredited programs and the total number of social work programs, in each region, which were used the Exit Survey from 2000-2007. Social work programs that use the Exit Survey were very similar to the total population of programs within all of the BPD regions except for region five. Region 5, West, had 4% more programs who use the Exit Survey than expected from the CSWE accredited program population.

Table 10

Exit Survey (N=203) and CSWE (N=458) Social Work Program Count by BPD Region

	Frequency		Valid Percent	
Region	Exit	CSWE	Exit	CSWE
1 – Southeast	35	71	15.6	15.5
2 – Mideast	47	95	20.9	20.7
3 – Southwest	32	62	14.2	13.5
4 – Midwest	54	104	24.1	22.7
5 – West	26	35	11.6	7.6
6 - Northeast	30	65	13.4	14.2
Missing	-	26	-	-

Note: Statistics adapted from CSWE (2006). CSWE data is from 2006 Jr. and Sr. BSW students, while Exit data is from 2000-2007, Sr. BSW students.

Research questions five through eight were answered using standard multiple regression. Summated skill and advising scores were used and based on all participants who had at least one skills or advising rating. The researcher combined the skill scores and combined the advising scores due to very high alphas on all of the questions. High alpha scores indicated that all of the questions were highly correlated. It should be noted that research question 5 was missing 7,191 responses and research question 7 was missing 7,243 responses, because students left one or more of the demographic questions (especially GPA) blank and the multiple regressions require complete data on all variables. However, the relationships were similar when computed one at a time to minimize missing data.

(5) How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?

To investigate how well student variables predicted social work skills scores, multiple regression was computed. The assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 11. The p-value in the F-test was examined, $F = 1.54$, $p = .187$, and indicates the model is not statistically significant. The $R^2 < .1\%$ of the accounted variability of the model. There is very little strength of association between the independent and dependent variables in this model, $R = .025$.

Partial regression coefficients, presented in Table 12, were examined to determine the strength of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable. The partial regression coefficients indicate GPA, disability status, and gender are not statistically significant; however, they have some value slightly above 0 that would indicate a very small predictive ability. The variable, age group, is statistically significant, $p = .047$. Thus, for every one age group increase in age, only a .03 increase in skill rating is predicted with this variable. The RMSE was compared to the standard deviation of the outcome variable, skill. The RMSE was 1.48660 and the standard deviation of skill in this model was 1.48677. There is not much difference between the RMSE and the standard deviation indicating that this model may not predict social work skill very well.

Table 11
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Social Work Skill Scores and Student Predictor Variables (N = 9,805)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
Skill Score	7.40	1.49	-.00	.02*	.01	.00
Predictor Variable						
1. Gender	1.10	.30	-	.11***	.90***	-.05***
2. Age	1.70	1.07		-	.17***	.15***
3. Disability	.18	.38			-	-.02*
4. GPA	5.13	.76				-

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .000$

Table 12
Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Social Work Skill Scores Controlling for Student Gender, Age, Disability, and GPA (N = 9,805)

Variable	*B*	*SEB*	*β*	R^2
Model 1				.00
Gender	-.04	.05	-.01	
Age	.03	.01	.02*	
Disability	.04	.04	.01	
GPA	-.01	.02	-.00	
Constant	7.41	.12		

*$p < .05$

(6) *How well can student feedback on the skills section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?*

To investigate how well program variables predicted social work skills scores, multiple regression was computed. The assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met. Dummy variables for each region were generated and correlated with overall skills to assess which regions showed higher Pearson correlations. Upon examination regions 6 and 3 showed the highest correlation and therefore were chosen for the regression analysis. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 13. The p-value in the F-test was examined, $F = 163.52$, $p < .001$, and indicates the model is statistically significant. The $R^2 = 5.6\%$ of the accounted variability of the model. There is some strength of association between the combination of independent variables and the dependent variables in this model, $R = .238$. This is a little smaller than typical effect size for this combination of variables (Morgan, et al., 2007).

Partial regression coefficients, presented in Table 14, were examined to determine the strength of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable. The partial regression coefficients indicate the dummy variable 2 under auspice, (private denominational program), is not statistically significant; however, it has some value slightly above 0 that would indicate a very small predictive ability. All of the other variables were statistically significant; region 6 (Northeast), $p = .000$, region 3 (Southwest), $p = .008$, BSW only, $p = .000$, dummy variable 1 under auspice (public programs), $p = .000$, and program size, $p = .000$. All of the variables except private denominational auspice combine to contribute significantly to this model. The partial regression coefficients for the statistically significant variables are positive and indicate a positive relationship with social work skill score. The RMSE was compared to the

standard deviation of the outcome variable, skill. The RMSE was 1.47034 and the standard deviation of skill in this model was 1.51343. The RMSE is smaller than the standard deviation indicating that this model may be able to predict social work skill.

Table 13
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Social Work Skill Scores and Program Predictor Variables (N = 16,397)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
Skill Score	7.38	1.51	.08*	-.08*	.20*	-.16*	-.15*	.11*
Predictor Variable								
1. Region 6	.12	.32	-	-.17*	-.03*	-.11*	-.17*	-.01*
2. Region 3	.17	.38		-	-.18*	-.11*	.25*	-.16*
3. Type	.75	.43			-	-.32*	-.30*	.28*
4. Size	1.94	.93				-	.45*	-.35*
5. Auspice Public	.68	.47					-	-.77*
6. Auspice Private - denominational	.21	.41						-

*$p < ..001$

Table 14
Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Social Work Skill Scores Controlling for Program Type, Auspice, Region and Size (N =16,397)

Variable	*B*	*SEB*	*β*	R^2
Model 1				.06
Region 6	.27	.04	.06**	
Region 3	-.08	.03	-.02*	
Type	.54	.03	.15**	
Size	-.13	.01	-.08**	
Auspice Public	-.22	.04	-.07**	
Auspice Private - denominational	-.07	.05	-.02	
Constant	7.35	.05		

*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

(7) How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of student variables (GPA, Gender, Disability, Age)?

To investigate how well student variables predicted advising scores, multiple regression was computed. The assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 15. The *p*-value in the *F*-test was examined, $F = 9.92$, $p < .001$, and indicates the model is statistically significant. The $R^2 = .4\%$ of the accounted variability of the model. There is little strength of association between the independent and dependent variables in this model, $R = .064$.

Partial regression coefficients, presented in Table 16, were examined to determine the strength of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable. The partial regression coefficients indicate GPA and disability status are not statistically significant; however, they have some value slightly above 0 that would indicate a very small predictive ability. The variable age group is statistically significant, $p < .001$, and gender is statistically significant, $p < .001$. However, for every one age group increase, only a .08 increase in advising score is predicted with this variable.

The partial regression coefficients for age group and gender are positive and indicate a small, positive relationship with advising score. The RMSE was compared to the standard deviation of the outcome variable, skill. The RMSE was 2.27093 and the standard deviation of skill in this model was 2.27508. There is not much difference between the RMSE and the standard deviation indicating that this model may not predict advising experience very well.

Table 15
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Advising Score and Student Predictor Variables (N =9,753)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
Advising Score	6.57	2.28	.05***	.04***	-.02	.01
Predictor Variable						
1. Gender	1.10	.30	-	.11***	-.06***	.09***
2. Age	1.71	1.07		-	.15***	.17***
3. GPA	5.14	.76			-	-.02*
4. Disability	.18	.38				-

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .000$

Table 16
Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Advising Score Controlling for Student Gender, Age, GPA, and Disability (N =9753)

Variable	*B*	*SEB*	*B*	R^2
Model 1				.00
Gender	.35	.08	.05***	
Age	.08	.02	.04***	
GPA	-.06	.03	-.02	
Disability	-.04	.06	-.01	
Constant	6.34	.18		

*$p < .05$, $p < .001$, ***$p < .000$

(8) How well can student feedback on the advising section of the BEAP Exit Survey be predicted from a combination of program variables (program type, program auspice, number of students graduating, BPD region)?

To investigate how well program variables predicted advising skills scores, multiple regression was computed. The assumptions of linearity, normally distributed errors, and uncorrelated errors were checked and met. Dummy variables for each region were generated and correlated with overall skills to assess which regions showed higher Pearson correlations. Upon examination regions 2, 3, and 4 showed the highest correlation and therefore were chosen for the regression analysis. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 17. The p-value in the F-test was examined, $F = 171.88$, $p < .001$, and indicates the model is statistically significant. The $R^2 = 6.9\%$ of the accounted variability of the model. There is strength of association between the combination of the independent variables and the dependent variable in this model, $R = .262$. This is a little smaller than typical effect size for this combination of variables (Morgan, et al., 2007).

Partial regression coefficients, presented in Table 18, were examined to determine the strength of the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable. The partial regression coefficients indicate dummy variable 2 under auspice (private denominational program) and region 3 (Southwest) are not statistically significant; however, both have some value slightly above 0 that would indicate a very small predictive ability. All of the other variables were statistically significant; region 2 (Mideast), $p = .001$, region 4 (Midwest), $p < .001$, BSW only, $p <= .001$, dummy variable 1 under auspice (public programs), $p < .001$, and program size, $p < .001$. The partial

regression coefficients for BSW only, region 4, and region 2 are positive and indicate a positive relationship with advising score. The variables dummy variable 1 under auspice (public program) and size are negative and indicate a negative relationship with advising score. The RMSE was compared to the standard deviation of the outcome variable, skill. The RMSE was 2.21017 and the standard deviation of skill in this model was 2.28982. There is a very small difference between the RMSE and the standard deviation indicating that this model may not be able to predict social work skill. However, there is strength of association between the variables in the model and the effect size indicates some predictive ability.

Table 17
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Advising Score and Program Predictor Variables (N = 16,302)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Advising Score	6.54	2.29	.01	-.04*	-.02*	.22*	-.18*	-.17*	.14*
Predictor Variable									
1. Region 2	.24	.43	-	-.26*	-.27*	.12*	-.01*	-.06*	.07*
2. Region 3	.17	.38		-	-.22*	-.18*	.11*	.25*	-.16*
3. Region 4	.19	.39			-	.06*	-.02*	-.15*	.21*
4. Type	.75	.43				-	-.32*	-.30*	.28*
5. Size	1.94	.93					-	.45*	-.35*
6. Auspice Public	.68	.47						-	-.76*
7. Auspice P-Denominational	.21	.41							-

*$p < .000$

Table 18
Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Advising Score Controlling for Program Region, Type, Size, and Auspice (N =16,302)

Variable	*B*	*SEB*	*β*	R^2
Model 1				.07
Region 2	-.14	.05	-.03**	
Region 3	.02	.05	.00	
Region 4	-.29	.05	-.05***	
Type	.93	.04	.18***	
Size	-.20	.02	-.08***	
Auspice Public	-.38	.06	-.08***	
Auspice Private-denominational	.10	.07	.02	
Constant	6.54	.08		

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$

(3) How do students rate each of the social work skills on the BEAP Exit Survey?

Skill questions were answered by students on a 0-10 point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were run for each of the skill question variables. The percentage of students who rated their skill as low or very high was computed for each skill question. Table 19 indicates the mean, standard deviation and valid percent of the low (0-2) and very high (8-10) scores of each skill question. Students rated their perceived social work skill levels on average between good (6.86) and the very good range (7.90). A majority of all students rated each of the skill questions, (except 6, 7, and 8) as very high. For

questions 6, 7, and 8, only 47.4%, 43.8%, and 45.1%, respectively, rated them very high (8-10). For question 6 the student's rated themselves on how prepared they were to have an impact on organizational policy. Questions 7 and 8 rate how prepared the student is to evaluate research articles and apply research to social work practice.

For research question 3b Cohen's metric for small effect size was used to determine whether a difference was worth describing as higher or lower (Morgan, et al., 2007). Two tenths (.36) of a standard deviation was used as the cut off point in decision making for this question. For example, the mean score on skill questions 1, applying culturally competent interventions, is 7.36 for BSW only and 6.71 for combined programs (see Table 24). Subtracting the lower score from the higher score, exceeds the criteria of .36 and meets the criteria of Cohen's metric for small effect size.

Table 19

BEAP Exit Survey Overall Social Work Skills Variables by Student (N=16,996)

	% Scores very low 0-2 range	% Scores very high 8-10 range	Mean	Median	SD
1. Culturally competent interventions	1.3	51.2	7.19	8.0	1.82
2. Professional use of self	.5	67.8	7.90	8.0	1.66
3. Applying generalist interventions	.6	63.6	7.74	8.0	1.69
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	1.5	53.7	7.32	8.0	1.88
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	1.2	53.5	7.34	8.0	1.81
6. Influence organizational policies	1.5	47.4	7.08	7.0	1.87
7. Evaluating research studies	2.7	43.8	6.86	7.0	2.04
8. Applying research to practice	2.5	45.1	6.91	7.0	2.01
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	1.3	56.6	7.44	8.0	1.85
10. Using communication skills	.9	61.4	7.65	8.0	1.74
11. Using supervision in practice	1.4	59.2	7.54	8.0	1.87
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	1.0	57.3	7.48	8.0	1.77
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	1.8	50.3	7.17	8.0	1.90

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

(3b)How do students rate social work skills overall, broken down by student and program demographic variables?

Social work skills means were compared across the four different age groups using descriptive statistics. Table 20 indicates the mean of each skill question as it was rated by students in each of the four age groups. Although individual age groups did not differ enough to meet the set criteria, 12 out of 13 of the skill variables were higher for students age 31 and over.

Social work skills ratings means were compared across student gender using descriptive statistics. Table 21 shows the average ratings for each gender on each skill; however, each gender rated slightly higher than the other in particular areas of social work skill. Although gender did not differ enough to meet the set criteria, there was a notable pattern for female students who rated questions related to professional use of self (#2), applying generalist interventions (#3), use of theories (#4), use of communication skills with diverse populations (#10), and use of supervision (#11) differently than male students. There was also a notable pattern for male students who rated themselves differently than female students in the ability to influence organizational policies (#6), and evaluate research studies (#7) and apply research to practice (#8).

Social work skills ratings means were compared with students who had a disability and did not have a disability. Using the stated criteria, Table 22 shows that students with a disability were no different than student without a disability in rating their skill level. However, there is a notable pattern in that students without a disability rated themselves differently on question 2, the use of professional self, and question 9, evaluating practice with supervision. Both sets of students rated themselves equally on

question 11, use of supervision in practice and 13, seeking organizational change with supervision.

Social work skill rating means were compared with student GPA group means using descriptive statistics. In Table 23, students with the highest GPA of 4.0, rated question 2, the professional use of self, question 3, applying generalist social work interventions, question 4, using bio-psychosocial theories, and question 7, evaluating research studies, higher than the other GPA groups.

Skill question variables were compared among the two program type variables using descriptive statistics. Table 24 notes the differences using the stated criteria. Students in BSW only programs consistently rated higher on all 13 social work skill question variables.

Table 20
Exit Survey Skills Means by Student Age Groups (N=16,996)

	Age Groups			
Skill Question	25 & under	26-30	31-40	41 +
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.14	7.30	7.36	7.35
2. Professional use of self	7.92	7.94	8.00	7.87
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.73	7.78	7.90	7.82
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.27	7.39	7.48	7.50
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.28	7.41	7.56	7.51
6. Influence organizational policies	7.01	7.15	7.31	7.27
7. Evaluating research studies	6.81	6.93	6.99	7.05
8. Applying research to practice	6.88	7.00	7.02	7.03
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.46	7.50	7.47	7.43
10. Using communication skills	7.65	7.69	7.76	7.74
11. Using supervision in practice	7.57	7.57	7.58	7.51
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.45	7.59	7.62	7.57
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.15	7.25	7.30	7.26

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 21
Exit Survey Skills by Student Gender Means (N=16,996)

	Gender	
Skill Question	Male	Female
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.21	7.20
2. Professional use of self	7.74	7.92
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.67	7.76
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.28	7.32
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.36	7.34
6. Influence organizational policies	7.16	7.07
7. Evaluating research studies	6.98	6.85
8. Applying research to practice	7.00	6.91
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.39	7.45
10. Using communication skills	7.60	7.66
11. Using supervision in practice	7.45	7.56
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.46	7.48
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.17	7.18

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 22
Exit Survey Skills by Student Disability Means (N=14,700)

	Disability	
Skill Question	Yes	No
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.26	7.20
2. Professional use of self	7.91	7.93
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.80	7.77
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.39	7.32
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.43	7.33
6. Influence organizational policies	7.15	7.07
7. Evaluating research studies	6.90	6.87
8. Applying research to practice	6.95	6.92
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.44	7.46
10. Using communication skills	7.71	7.66
11. Using supervision in practice	7.56	7.56
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.52	7.49
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.18	7.18

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 23
Exit Survey Skills by Student GPA Means (N=16,996)

	Grade Point Average Groups				
Skill Question	1.5-2.4	2.5-2.9	3.0-3.4	3.5-3.9	4.0
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.10	7.28	7.21	7.18	7.10
2. Professional use of self	7.59	7.90	7.90	7.97	8.09
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.32	7.72	7.76	7.83	7.82
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	6.96	7.33	7.28	7.44	7.41
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.13	7.35	7.31	7.42	7.48
6. Influence organizational policies	7.03	7.18	7.08	7.05	6.85
7. Evaluating research studies	6.70	6.88	6.81	6.93	7.07
8. Applying research to practice	6.76	6.98	6.88	6.96	7.08
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.26	7.54	7.46	7.42	7.21
10. Using communication skills	7.51	7.74	7.66	7.66	7.66
11. Using supervision in practice	7.46	7.62	7.54	7.57	7.41
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.40	7.54	7.46	7.52	7.47
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.17	7.33	7.19	7.09	7.03

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 24
Exit Survey Skills by Program Type Means (N=16,996)

	Program Type	
Skill Question	BSW	BSW/MSW
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.36	6.71
2. Professional use of self	8.05	7.45
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.90	7.29
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.47	6.87
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.51	6.83
6. Influence organizational policies	7.27	6.50
7. Evaluating research studies	7.03	6.35
8. Applying research to practice	7.09	6.39
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.61	6.94
10. Using communication skills	7.81	7.19
11. Using supervision in practice	7.71	7.06
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.66	6.95
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.37	6.60

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Skill question variables were compared among social work program size groups using descriptive statistics. Table 25 indicates a small to medium effect size as noted in the stated criteria for skill questions 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13, when comparing the smallest program size (0-24 students) to the other four program sizes. There is also a very strong pattern in the table for the smallest social work programs (0-24 graduating students) which rated all 13 skill questions higher than the other four larger program sizes.

Skill question variables were compared among social work program auspice types using descriptive statistics. As noted in Table 26, there is a small to medium effect size for all 13 skill question variables when the public program group is compared to the private denominational and non-denominational program groups. Both of the private program groups have higher student ratings than the public program group for all 13 skill questions.

The last means comparison table is a comparison of skill question variables among BPD regions using descriptive statistics. In Table 27, there is a small to medium effect size for students in region 6, the Northeast. The students in this region rated all of the skills questions somewhat higher than regions 3, the Southwest and region 5, the West. There is also a pattern for skills questions 1, 4, 7, 9, 11, and 13. Region 6, the Northest, rated these skill questions somewhat higher than region 4, the Midwest.

Table 25
Exit Survey Skills by Program Size Means (N=16,996)

	Program Size				
Skill Question	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-99	100+
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.46	7.12	7.00	6.69	6.73
2. Professional use of self	8.16	7.84	7.67	7.36	7.36
3. Applying generalist interventions	8.03	7.68	7.49	7.20	7.17
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.63	7.29	6.97	6.71	6.64
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.62	7.25	7.09	6.91	6.70
6. Influence organizational policies	7.39	6.98	6.86	6.62	6.31
7. Evaluating research studies	7.10	6.85	6.54	6.39	6.29
8. Applying research to practice	7.16	6.88	6.62	6.51	6.39
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.75	7.37	7.14	6.83	7.04
10. Using communication skills	7.90	7.60	7.45	7.09	7.13
11. Using supervision in practice	7.88	7.47	7.23	6.91	7.10
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.77	7.39	7.26	6.91	7.15
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.46	7.10	6.92	6.61	6.88

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 26
Exit Survey Skills by Program Auspice Means (N=16,996)

Skill Question	Public	Private-D	Private-ND
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.06	7.46	7.55
2. Professional use of self	7.76	8.22	8.16
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.59	8.09	8.01
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.15	7.64	7.75
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.18	7.68	7.62
6. Influence organizational policies	6.93	7.40	7.43
7. Evaluating research studies	6.69	7.13	7.41
8. Applying research to practice	6.75	7.19	7.45
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.27	7.80	7.80
10. Using communication skills	7.53	7.92	7.92
11. Using supervision in practice	7.38	7.90	7.90
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.33	7.80	7.74
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.03	7.44	7.57

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Table 27
Exit Survey Skills by Program Region Means (N=16,996)

Skill Question	Region of the Country					
	South east	Mideast	South West	Midwest	West	North east
1. Culturally competent interventions	7.43	7.19	7.00	7.09	6.98	7.50
2. Professional use of self	7.95	7.92	7.73	7.91	7.75	8.15
3. Applying generalist interventions	7.83	7.75	7.54	7.76	7.60	7.99
4. Using bio-psychosocial theories	7.40	7.36	7.04	7.24	7.22	7.71
5. Analyzing impact of social policies	7.45	7.35	7.08	7.33	7.18	7.67
6. Influence organizational policies	7.33	7.12	6.78	7.01	6.85	7.35
7. Evaluating research studies	7.03	6.90	6.50	6.87	6.67	7.20
8. Applying research to practice	7.11	6.94	6.53	6.94	6.71	7.25
9. Evaluating practice with supervision	7.53	7.47	7.16	7.41	7.23	7.84
10. Using communication skills	7.83	7.67	7.48	7.57	7.45	7.89
11. Using supervision in practice	7.66	7.59	7.26	7.48	7.38	7.95
12. Functioning within organizational structures and policies	7.67	7.54	7.25	7.42	7.23	7.69
13. Seek organizational change with supervision	7.42	7.22	6.91	7.09	6.88	7.49

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10 point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

(4) How do students rate the quality of advising received in their social work program on the BEAP Exit Survey?

Advising questions were answered by students on a 0-10 point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were run for each of the advising question. The percentage of students who rated their advising experience as low or very high was computed for each advising question. Table 28 shows the overall student response to Exit Survey advising variables. Students completing the Exit Survey from 2000-2007 rated their overall advising experience as good. In the area of course selection and curriculum planning students rated their experience as good (6.84). In the area of career planning student rated their experience as good (6.10) and in the area of professional advising student rated their experience as good (6.68). Approximately half of the students rated their advising experience, in the areas of course selection and curriculum planning and professional advising, in the high range. Note that these advising ratings seem to be somewhat lower than the skill ratings in Table 19. The standard deviations were also higher indicating more variability in how students rated advising than in their skill ratings.

Table 28
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Student (N=16,996)

Quality of advising student received during program:	% Scores very low 0-2 range	% Scores very high 8-10 range	Mean	Median	SD
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	5.4	50.4	6.84	8.0	2.38
b. Career planning	9.4	35.8	6.10	6.0	2.53
c. Professional advising	7.2	47.0	6.68	7.0	2.56

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

For research question 4b Cohen's metric for small effect size was used to determine whether a difference was worth describing as higher or lower. Half (.50) of a standard deviation was used as the cut off point in decision making for this question.

(4b) How do students rate the quality of advising overall, broken down by key student and program demographic variables?

Advising questions were compared by student age groups using descriptive statistics. Using the specified criteria, Table 29 indicates very slight differences in means between the four age groups. There is a noteworthy pattern; students in the 40 and older group rated differently in all three advising areas than their younger counterparts.

Table 29
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Age Groups (N=16,996)

	Age Groups			
Quality of advising:	24 & under	25-29	30-39	40 +
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	6.83	6.88	6.82	7.05
b. Career planning	6.05	6.14	6.23	6.40
c. Professional advising	6.65	6.71	6.71	6.95

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Using descriptive statistics, advising questions were compared among student gender using the specified criteria. Table 30 indicates no differences in male and female students in any of the advising areas. However, there is a pattern with male students who rated all three advising questions differently than female students.

Table 30
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Student Gender (N=16,996)

	Gender	
Quality of advising:	Male	Female
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	7.04	6.82
b. Career planning	6.43	6.07
c. Professional advising	7.02	6.64

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Using descriptive statistics, advising questions were compared among students with a disability and those with no reported disability. Table 31 indicates that there were no differences between the two student populations.

Table 31
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Student Disability (N=14,551)

	Disability	
Quality of advising:	Yes	No
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	6.89	6.84
b. Career planning	6.10	6.10
c. Professional advising	6.71	6.68

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Advising questions were compared across GPA groups using descriptive statistics. As noted in Table 32, there are very little differences between the five GPA groups.

Table 32
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Student GPA (N=16,996)

	Grade Point Average Groups				
Quality of advising:	1.5-2.4	2.5-2.9	3.0-3.4	3.5-3.9	4.0
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	6.63	6.81	6.83	6.91	6.99
b. Career planning	6.32	6.22	6.11	6.05	5.92
c. Professional advising	6.68	6.78	6.65	6.66	6.81

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Using descriptive statistics, advising questions were compared across social work program auspice. Table 33 indicates that private denominational programs rate their advising experience somewhat higher than the other two program auspices. There was a larger than typical (.80+) effect size for private denominational social work programs.

Table 33
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Program Auspice (N=16,996)

	Program Auspice		
Quality of advising:	Public	Private-D	Private-ND
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	6.59	7.45	7.17
b. Career planning	5.83	6.73	6.56
c. Professional advising	6.39	7.31	7.22

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions. Private-D=private denominational institutions, Private-ND=private non-denominational institutions.

Using descriptive statistics, advising questions were compared across the two program types. As noted in Table 34, BSW programs rated their advising experience higher in all three advising categories. There was a larger than typical (.80+) effect size for BSW only programs.

Table 34
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Program Type (N=16,996)

	Program Type	
Quality of advising:	BSW	BSW/MSW
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	7.08	6.12
b. Career planning	6.42	5.16
c. Professional advising	7.00	5.70

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Advising questions were compared across the five program size groups. Table 35 shows that the programs with the smallest number of students, 0-24, rate their advising experience higher than largeer social work programs. There was a medium or typical (.50+) effect size for the smallest (0-24 students) programs.

Table 35
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Program Size (N=16,996)

	Program Size				
Quality of advising:	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-99	100 +
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	7.26	6.70	6.54	6.06	5.66
b. Career planning	6.62	5.91	5.78	5.12	5.12
c. Professional advising	7.21	6.49	6.26	5.89	5.48

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Advising questions were compared across BPD regions. Table 36 indicates that students in region 1, the Southest, rated their advising experience higher than students in region 5 for advising question a, regions 3, 4, and 5 for advising question b, and regions 3 and 5 for advising question c. There was a medium (.50) to larger than typical (.80+) effect size for region 1, the Southeast.

Table 36
BEAP Exit Survey Advising Variables by Program Region (N=16,996)

	Region of the Country					
Quality of advising:	South east	Mideast	South West	Midwest	West	Northeast
a. Course selection and curriculum planning	7.08	6.85	6.66	6.85	6.53	6.96
b. Career planning	6.54	6.18	5.90	5.96	5.69	6.16
c. Professional advising	7.05	6.72	6.47	6.62	6.20	6.84

Note. The questions were answered using a 0-10-point Likert scale and are part of a full instrument containing 73 questions.

Summary of Results

This study examined BEAP Exit Survey data from 2000-2007. A total of 16,996 student responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. Not surprisingly, almost 90% of the participants were female students and only about 10% were male students. The mean age of student participants was 28 years-old with the majority of students (65%) in the 25 or younger age group. Students who participated in completing the BEAP Exit Survey had an overall grade point average of 3.3 and the majority had no reported disability (78%). The majority of social work programs that use the BEAP Exit Survey were found to be small and BSW only programs.

The regression analyses revealed statistically significant results in many areas. For example, student demographics produced no effect with social work skills, although there was some statistical significance with student age and gender. Program variables were more predictive of social work skill and advising experience than the student predictor variables and also had small to typical effect sizes in both areas. For example, program variables regressed on both social work skill mean and advising mean produced a predictive model for students rating both social work skills and advising experience.

Interestingly, student demographics do not appear to predict social work skills ratings very well. However, there were consistent patterns for some of the student demographics. For example, 12 out of 13 of the skill variables were rated higher for non-traditional students (age 31 and over), female students rated questions related to professional use of self (#2), applying generalist interventions (#3), use of theories (#4), use of communication skills with diverse populations (#10), and use of supervision (#11)

slightly higher than male students and male students who rated their ability to influence organizational policies (#6), and evaluate research studies (#7) and apply research to practice (#8) slightly higher than females. There were no differences in social work skill ratings for students with or without a reported disability; however, students with the highest GPA (4.0) rated the professional use of self (#2), applying generalist social work interventions (#3), using bio-psychosocial theories (#4), and evaluating research studies (#7), higher than the other lower GPA groups.

Student demographics also do not appear to predict advising experience ratings very well. However, like the results above, there were consistent patterns for some of the student demographics. There were very slight differences in rating means for the four age groups but non-traditional students (40 and older) rated their advising experience slightly higher than other age students. There was little difference in advising ratings for male and female students, students with or without a reported disability, and the five GPA groups.

Compared to student demographics, program demographics did show notable results in this study. Students in the smallest (0-24) social work programs rated their skills higher on 7 of the 13 social work skill variables with a typical effect size. Students in private social work programs, both denominational and non-denominational, rated their social work skills higher than those students in public programs with a small to typical effect size. Students in BPD region six (Northeast) rated their social work skills somewhat higher than all other BPD regions with a small to typical effect size. There were differences in ratings for students in BSW only and combined BSW/MSW

programs. Students in BSW only programs rated their skills higher than students in combined programs.

Program demographics also showed notable results in the area of advising experience. Students in private denominational programs rated their advising experience higher than the other two program types with a larger than typical effect size. Students in BSW only programs rated their advising experience higher in all three advising categories and there was a larger than typical effect size. Students in the smallest programs (0-24) rated their advising experience higher than other social work programs with a typical effect size. Lastly, students in BPD region one (Southeast) rated their advising experience higher than students in the other regions with a typical effect size.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the study findings by student and program variable and each variable will be discussed in the context of social work skills and the quality of the advising experience. The links between the literature and findings and the theory and findings, for this study, will be presented. Lastly, study limitations, recommendations and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Discussion

There were 16,996 student responses and 203 social work programs used in the analysis for this study.

BEAP Exit Survey and CSWE Data Comparisons

Surprisingly, the BEAP Exit Survey data was comparable to the CSWE student and program data, although there were some differences between the two data sets. The Exit Survey data spans eight years (2000-2007); whereas, the CSWE data utilized encompasses only one year. Additionally, CSWE data includes junior and senior full-time students in 2006, while Exit Survey data includes the total number of graduating seniors from 2000-2007 who completed the BEAP Exit Survey.

There were 458 accredited BSW programs in the United States as of 2006 (CSWE, 2006). Social work programs that use the Exit Survey are approximately half of

the total population of programs within each of the BPD regions, except for region five, the west, where 26 out of 35 institutions participated in using the BEAP Exit Survey.

Social Work Skill Questions, Advising Questions, and Student Demographics

Social Work Skill Questions. Students tend to rate their social work skills better if they value their tasks more, have greater intrinsic motivation, and higher self-efficacy (Fortune, et al., 2005, p. 122). In this study, there is no way to determine whether motivation or self-efficacy impacted the students' scores. However, in her dissertation, Holmquist-Johnson (2008) found similar results as did this study, related to a student's perceived ability to engage in research upon graduation from their MSW program. Holmquist-Johnson found that students' perceived research knowledge was related to student attitudes and research self-efficacy. Studies have found that as student knowledge increases, so do positive attitudes toward subjects that are typically disliked, such as research and policy (Olsen, 1990; Secret, Ford, & Rompf, 2003).

Skill questions were answered by students on a 0-10 point Likert scale. On average, students rated their perceived social work skill levels between good (6) and very good (7). A majority of students rated each of the skill questions, except 6, 7, and 8, in the 8.0-10.0 range (very high). For questions 6, 7, and 8, only 47.4%, 43.8%, and 45.1%, respectively, rated themselves in the very high range (8.0-10.0). Question 6 rates the student's preparedness for having an impact on organizational policy. Questions 7 and 8 rate how prepared the student is to evaluate research articles and apply research to social work practice. Interestingly, student variables had little effect on how students rated their

social work skills; however, program variables were predictive of student social work skill ratings.

Advising Questions. Advising questions were answered by students on a 0-10 point Likert scale. Students completing the Exit Survey rated their overall advising experience as good on all three advising questions. In the area of course selection and curriculum planning, students rated their experience as good (6.84). In the areas of career planning and professional advising, students rated their experience as good, with means of 6.10 and 6.68, respectively. Approximately half of the students rated their advising experience, in the areas of course selection and curriculum planning and professional advising, in the very high range (8.0-10.0). These findings appear to indicate that students are satisfied with their advising experience overall. Like the skills questions, the student demographics had little effect on how social work advising questions were rated; however, program demographics were predictive of student advising experience ratings.

Age. Non-traditional students, typically defined as a student who is 25 years or older, have the ability to make important contributions to the field of social work. They have life experience, insights, and abilities that enable them to empathize with the populations typically served by social workers (Phillips, 1989; Sturges, Bombyk, & Chernesky, 1989). Cassano and Cattaneo (1988) found that the age of social work students was related to clinical judgment. Older students were found to be more permissive with clients (Cassano & Cattaneo, 1988) and have less anxiety about entering practicum (Gelman, 2004; Rompf, et al., 1993). The non-traditional student may identify with the client due to their own life experiences and the older student may be more relaxed and feel more competent with their practice skills (Cassano & Cattaneo, 1988;

Gelman, 2004; Sturges, et al., 1989). Cassano and Cattaneo (1988) contend that younger social work students may feel the need for more structure during interventions with clients because of age, and developmental differences, discomfort with client problems, and the inability to be straightforward. Younger students were also more prone to advice-giving or discouraging certain behaviors with their clients. Zosky, Unger, White, and Mills (2003) found that field instructors rated non-traditional students' social work skills higher and more positively than traditional students.

In this study, the mean age of the students was 27.8 years with the majority (64.5%) of students in the 25 years and under age group. Social work skill questions were compared across the four different age groups. Although a pattern emerged with older, non-traditional students who rated their social work skill level somewhat higher, than younger students, there was little to no effect between the variables. There were very slight differences in advising ratings for the four age groups but older (40+), non-traditional students rated their advising experience somewhat higher than their younger counterparts.

Gender. The gender breakdown of student respondents in this study was 89.9% female and 10.1% male. Social work skill questions were compared across genders. Like age, gender was found to have little effect on social work skill ratings. However, there was a pattern with male and female student ratings on particular questions. For example, female students rated the questions related to professional use of self (#2), applying generalist interventions (#3), use of theories (#4), use of communication skills with diverse populations (#10), and use of supervision (#11) somewhat higher than male students, whereas, male students rated themselves somewhat higher than female students

on the ability to influence organizational policies (#6), and evaluate research studies (#7) and apply research to practice (#8).

Advising questions were also compared by gender. There were few differences between male and female students. Interestingly, in a dissertation study completed by Rogers (2008), males and females did not differ when relating their social work program experiences, except that males reported being made aware of their gender more often than females. In another study, Hearn (1985) found gender differences in satisfaction related to faculty contact, reporting that women valued faculty contact more than their male counterparts. However, quality of teaching and faculty knowledge were rated high among both genders. This study reports slightly different outcomes than the literature.

Disability. Watkinson and Chalmers (2008) voice concern about the protection of the rights of the social work students with disabilities, and the obligation of the social work program to ensure the students' suitability to the profession. They state that "systematic discrimination can arise from policies and regulations that are applied to everyone but impact negatively on certain groups of people..." (p. 516). In their paper conclusion, Watkinson and Chalmers ask social work educators to assist in the determination of student suitability. They indicate that social work programs are reluctant to make decisions about student suitability. Therefore, responsibility often falls on the field instructor as field placement is where issues relating to suitability of the student to the profession arise.

In this study, the majority (78.0%) of the students indicated that they did not have a disability. Student disability status was compared across social work skills questions

and advising questions. There were no differences in social work skill or advising experience ratings for students with or without a reported disability.

Grade Point Average. Bean and Bradley (1986) studied academic performance and its relationship to student satisfaction. They did not find that performance had a strong positive effect on satisfaction. Other researchers found that students preferred faculty that were informal and mutually respectful (Davenport & Davenport, 1988; Krause & Allen, 1988), collaborated in assessment, planning and evaluation (Davenport & Davenport, 1988; Fortune, et al., 1985), and were friendly and non-directive, but provided structure and encouragement (Krause & Allen, 1988; Fortune, et al., 1985). Other studies have shown student preferences for clear expectations and goals, feedback and the connection of theory and practice (Curiel & Rosenthal, 1987; Fortune et al., 1985; Hartung 1982; Morris & Haas, 1984).

Students in this study reported an overall GPA of 3.3. Social work skill questions were compared across student GPA groups. Students with the highest GPA (4.0) rated the professional use of self (#2), applying generalist social work interventions (#3), using bio-psychosocial theories (#4), and evaluating research studies (#7), higher than the other lower GPA groups. There were no differences in advising ratings between GPA groups.

Social Work Skills Questions, Advising Questions, and Program Demographics

Programs which participated in the use of the BEAP Exit Survey tended to be smaller in size, BSW only, but located in public institutions. Large, combined programs did not tend to use the BEAP Exit Survey to measure program outcomes.

Social Work Program Type. There were differences in ratings for students in BSW only and combined BSW/MSW programs. Students in BSW only programs rated their skills higher than students in combined programs. Unfortunately, there is no comparative research or literature in the area of social work program type except on student-faculty relationships. This research is discussed below after program size findings.

Social Work Program Auspice. Social work skill questions were compared across the three social work program auspices, public, private-denominational and private non-denominational. Students at private (denominational and non-denominational) social work programs rated their skill preparation higher on all questions than students at public social work programs. Advising questions were also compared across social work program auspice. Students at private denominational programs rated their advising experience slightly higher than students at the other two auspice types. Similar results were found in the skills and auspice analysis conducted by Buchan (V. Buchan, January 2009, personal communication) during earlier analyses of the BEAP data. Unfortunately, there is no other comparative research or literature in the area of social work program auspice.

Social Work Program Size. Social work skill questions were compared across social work program sizes. Students in the smallest social work programs (0-24 graduating students) rated 7 out of 13 social work skill questions higher than students in the other four program sizes. Advising questions were also compared across the five program size groups. Students in the smallest social work programs (0-24 graduating

students) also rated their advising experience higher than the students in the other four program sizes.

There is a great deal of literature that supports the findings in this study. Positive faculty-student relationships occur more often and may be stronger in smaller programs. According to researchers, small social work programs have many strengths including the amount of individualized attention given to students, quality of advisement offered to students, amount of interaction with students in the classroom, knowledge of students' academic strengths and weaknesses, responsiveness to individual student needs, and amount of faculty liaison interaction with field instructors (Drumm & Suppes, 2000; Icard et al., 1996). Small social work programs are a benefit to students as they allow a more personal relationship to develop between student and faculty (Icard et al., 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Many researchers have found that student relationships with faculty are particularly important in the educational process. There are indications that these relationships are "profound" and will have a "life-long impact" on the student (Baldino, 1998; Metz, 1995). Icard et al. (1996) call attention to the importance of professors sharing their knowledge and assisting students in acquiring the values of the social work profession, as well as, understanding the responsibilities of becoming a social worker. The sharing of this knowledge and value system can invoke positive feelings from the students, in turn affecting evaluations of the academic program (Icard et al., 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Social Work Program Region. As discussed in the literature review, reputation may have an impact on how students rate themselves and their programs. There are areas of the country in which small, traditional programs and longer established programs

reside. These areas of the country, specifically, the Northeast and Southeast regions, both did well in students' ratings of their skills and advising experience. Vaughn (2002) suggests that reputation plays an important part in a student's decision to attend a particular university, while Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) also argue that, although there is little empirical evidence, the impact of university image and reputation on student behavior is well recognized in the marketing world. Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) contend that university reputation helps to increase the number of students applying to the university, tuition, fees and its ability to establish and maintain a loyal relationship with students and parents.

In this study, program region was compared across the social work skill questions and advising questions. Students in region 6, the Northeast, rated all of the skills preparation questions somewhat higher than the students in other regions. Students in region 1, the Southeast, rated their advising experience higher than students in the other five BPD regions.

Systems Theory and Social Work Programs

The theory supporting this study is systems theory with an emphasis on the environmental perspective. As a reminder, systems theory identifies and describes systems which function and interact with other systems. A system consists of numerous parts with each part having a symbiotic relationship with the other parts. Systems theory is a way to examine individuals in their complex environment and observe the interactive patterns between people, groups and institutions. The environmental perspective views the individual in the context of his/her surrounding social systems; it does not take a

linear approach to the explanation of the influence the environment has on an individual. An environmental perspective informs this study in that students' characteristics, students' perceptions of the social work program and the students' interactions within the program influence their evaluation of the program.

These theories are a good fit for this study because it examined students and their relationship with faculty through the analysis of the advising questions. The rating the student places on each advising area is a reflection of the relationship between the student and faculty. This study also examined students and how they rated their social work skills. The rating of social work skills reflects the education received by the student. This educational experience not only encompasses what is taught in the classroom, but also includes the many other interactions that occur within the social work program as a result of the size of the program, the auspice and type of program, and where the program is located within the United States.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was completed in this study in order to examine whether student variables or program variables were able to predict social work skills or advising experience. Although the analysis revealed statistically significant results in many areas, the prediction ability was only very slight for student demographic variables. Student demographics were not found to predict social work skill and were only slightly predictive of advising experience. Program variables, however, were more predictive of social work skill and advising experience and had small to typical effect sizes.

Limitations

As with any social science research, this study has limitations. First, the findings from this study should be interpreted with caution. Survey data can be imperfect and may not reflect specific students and social work programs. Imperfections may result from incomplete surveys and/or data base entry errors. Additionally, the student gender analysis could be misleading as there are typically more female students enrolled nationwide in social work programs than male students. Second, there were missing data points in the data base. Some students did not fully complete the demographic section of the Exit Survey and/or data entry errors may have been made. For instance, approximately 7,000 data points were missing from two of the regression analyses, specifically student demographic information. Members of the BEAP team were notified and a recommendation will be made regarding this issue.

Another important limitation to keep in mind is how the BEAP Exit Survey is utilized within social work programs. Social work programs pay to use and administer the instrument without direct supervision of the BEAP team or BPD. All programs that buy and use the BEAP instruments have access to a handbook detailing the appropriate use of the instruments; however, there is no guarantee that the survey is utilized exactly as the instructions suggest. Additionally, response rates and presentation of the instrument to students prior to administration can also affect results. For this study, it is assumed that the social work programs have used great care and integrity in collecting their data as detailed in the BEAP handbook.

An important consideration when using the BEAP package is that the instruments are designed to address major pieces of the CSWE Accreditation Standards for BSW programs (EPAS), particularly related to curricular objectives; however, but it cannot fully assess achievement of all individual program goals and/or objectives. Social work education programs are themselves responsible for adding additional measures to assess compliance with CSWE Standards and to address objectives that are unique to their institutional mission.

Lastly, this study utilizes an existing instrument for analysis. It is acknowledged that the variables measured in this study are only some of the factors that may influence students' ratings of their social work skills and advising experience.

Recommendations

BEAP Team

A great deal of clean-up and recoding was completed on the BEAP data base in order for it to be utilized by this researcher for analysis. The data base should be regularly reviewed by the BEAP team in order to decrease data entry errors and to ensure all data is being scanned into the data base correctly. The BEAP team may also want to consider revising the size question on the program face sheets. Program size variables, for the most part, stayed consistent; however, some programs had multiple sizes indicated for their programs. This caused problems in the analysis of program size. The BEAP team may want to consider discussing this issue to determine the best way to collect program size data. Additionally, the CSWE program size break-downs used for this

analysis are not equally spaced and may not be the most appropriate for long-term data collection.

Lastly, the BEAP team may want to consider developing an MSW foundation assessment packet similar to the BEAP assessment packet. This would assist combined BSW/MSW and MSW only programs in assessing themselves and ensure students are receiving an appropriate foundation to their social work education. Also, the addition of an MSW foundation survey may assist the BEAP team in the recruitment of larger programs that are not currently using the BEAP instruments.

Social Work Programs

As stated above, programs should interpret the findings from this study with care. With that said, however, the program variables in this study revealed important, program specific findings. Overall, smaller programs tended to receive higher ratings on social work skills and advising ratings than larger programs. Additionally, faculty within social work programs need to be reminded of how important they are in the overall impact of program and student outcomes. The frequency and quality of student-faculty interactions affect student achievement and development (Fanney, 2003; Pascarella, 1980, Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) and, thus, evaluations (Endo & Harpel, 1982; Fanney, 2003; Lazar & Mosek, 1993). Larger programs should explore how they can evaluate faculty ability to establish relationships with their students. The student-faculty relationship directly affects program evaluation, as well as the social work skills of the student – in field placement and in real-life job situations (Icard, et al., 1996).

Recruitment and retention of students is another important consideration for social work programs. In this study, non-traditional students and students with disabilities rated themselves higher in many of the social work skills and on their advising experience than other groups of students. Non-traditional students have much to contribute to social work programs and as social work practitioners (Phillips, 1989; Zosky, et al, 2003). If a program provides these students flexibility and options, and they are successful within the program, the student will enhance the reputation of the program with higher ratings on evaluations. A consideration for programs intending to recruit and retain non-traditional students is the different needs they may have from traditional students. Non-traditional students need flexible educational program options that include child care, paid field placements, and non-traditional teaching methods, such as online or other distance learning, flexible course scheduling, and weekend classes (Zosky, et al., 2003).

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research on student-faculty relationships is recommended. There appears to be a gap in the literature here that could be improved with additional research. Other findings from this study suggest questions for further research, as well. Why did students with a low GPA report positive advising experiences more than those students with a higher GPA? Also, students with a low GPA rated themselves higher on certain social work skill areas. What is the difference between the students with a low GPA and those with a higher GPA? Another area of study is the relationship between student outcomes and practice ability. It would be interesting to examine the congruency of student ratings of their social work skills and the field supervisor ratings of the student's social work skills. The last area of research on students is the area related to differences between

genders. Although a recent dissertation completed at CSU examined the difference between male and female students in social work, additional research in this area would be interesting. Could it be that males are given more attention by faculty because they are a minority in social work programs compared to female students?

Further research would also be important on social work program demographics. Specifically, there is no research in the area of program type and auspice and its affect on student evaluations. Lastly, why does region of the country in which the program is located, make a difference in students' ratings? Although the current literature explains some of the differences in programs such as small vs. large settings and reputation, social work program region has not been studied in relation to student ratings.

Conclusion

Originally, the intent of BEAP was to give students an improved educational experience by helping social work programs evaluate, recognize, and change their curriculum, and other areas, as needed. The BEAP team is in the process of developing two additional instruments which are based on the 2001 and 2008 EPAS standards. These instruments will assist programs in measuring outcomes related to field placements and social work knowledge, values and skills. Additionally, all of the instruments have been updated to comply with the new 2008 EPAS standards. It is recommended that BSW programs consider utilizing the two new instruments, along with the other BEAP assessment instruments, to assist in monitoring their programs and reporting outcomes effectively.

There are four purposes to educational assessment: 1) to assure minimum standards of quality and content, 2) to identify and evaluate quality, 3) to assist with internal program planning and resource allocation, and 4) to provide consumer information (Vaughn, 2002). Program evaluation is important for accountability purposes within social work programs. Social work programs need to implement a well-articulated plan of assessment that meets program objectives. By doing this, social work programs are ensuring the first steps towards developing a culture of assessment that can eventually expand into a more comprehensive process (Poulin, et al., 2007).

Program evaluation also ensures student satisfaction, which increases the likelihood of a positive evaluation for the program. Competency-based learning, with agreed upon outcomes, is the basis for assessing and certifying individual student achievement within social work programs (Ewell, 2002). This study provided meaningful data about social work student and program demographics and the relationships between these demographics and social work skills and the advising experience.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR USE OF DATA

BSW Program and Student Demographics: A Longitudinal Data Analysis of the Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package (BEAP) Exit Data

We, the undersigned, agree to allow Tobi DeLong-Hamilton, LCSW to use the BEAP data base for the purposes of her doctoral dissertation.

Dr. Vicky Buchan	3/5/08 Date
Dr. Grafton Hull	3-5-08 Date
Dr. Marshall Smith	3/5/2008 Date
Dr. Roy Rodenhiser	4 Mar 08 Date
Dr. John Rogers	3/5/2008 Date
BEAP Member	Date
BEAP Member	Date

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL OF STUDY

Colorado State University

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of Vice President for Research
Fort Collins, CO 80523-2011
(970) 491-1553
FAX (970) 491-2293

Date: September 5, 2008

To: Tobi Hamilton

From: Janell Barker, IRB Administrator

Re: Bachelor Social Work Student Perceptions of Their Social Work Programs: A Multilevel Analysis of the Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package (BEAP) Exit Data

After review of the anonymous secondary information to be analyzed for the above-mentioned project, it was determined that the data did not meet the requirements of the federal definition of human subject research. "Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or identifiable private information."

Living individual – Y
About Whom – Y
Intervention/Interaction – N
Identifiable Private Information – N

The Guidance on Research Involving Coded Private Information or Biological Specimens from the Office for Human Research Protections (ORHP) was also referenced in determining that this was not under the Institutional Review Board's purview.

Thank you for submitting this information. If you have more projects that are similar, please contact us prior to submission. The IRB must determine whether a project needs to have IRB approval.